DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 369 306 FL 800 753

TITLE	Literacy Works, Volume 4, 1992-93.
INSTITUTION	Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Saskatoon.
PUB DATE	93
NOTE	127p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, Canada ($5 per issue).
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Literacy Works; v4 n1-4 1992-93
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC06 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Literacy; American Indian Languages; Business; *Canada Natives; Cognitive Style; Computers; Deafness; Developmental Disabilities; Employers; Employment Opportunities; Fetal Alcohol Syndrome; Foreign Countries; *Immigrants; Indigenous Populations; Language Usage; *Learning Disabilities; *Literacy Education; North American English; Reading Skills; Student Evaluation; *Tutoring; Word Processing
IDENTIFIERS	Canada; Fetal Drug Exposure; Workplace Literacy

ABSTRACT

Four issues of the newsletter are included. Number 1, with the theme "Literacy and New Canadians," includes an editorial on the government's new language training programs, articles on programs for newcomers, news from the Prairie Literacy Institute, and short reports on a theater project and adolescent problems. Focusing on "Literacy and Learning Disabilities," number 2 contains an editorial on early intervention, tutoring tips on word attack techniques and on fetal alcohol syndrome, and profiles on the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, Regional College, a Calgary program, self-efficacy, sensitivity in assessment, needs of Aboriginal people, and diverse learning styles. It also includes several resource reviews. Number 3 features an "Update on Literacy and Literacy for" the workplace, the family, the learning disabled, computers, seniors, the business community, the hearing impaired, and the mentally handicapped. An article on tutoring tips focuses on the jigsaw reading technique. Emerging literacy concerns include the needs for English-as-a-Second-Language literacy for the deaf. The theme of number 4 is "Native Education and Literacy." It offers articles on the START Program, the Muskeg Lake library, oral tradition, word processing in Native language characters, Aboriginal participation in employment, Regina Public Library's Native Literacy Project, an Aboriginal/corporate workplace program, the SUNTEP program for training native teachers, and the Indian Student Education Centre. (LB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 369 306

LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 4, No. 1 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network **Fall 1992**

Literacy and New Canadians

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Nayda Veeman
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality
● Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

FL 800 753

Price: $5.00 for non-members (includes tax)

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Editorial committee this issue
Ved Arora, Hilary Craig, Elizabeth Slater,
Brenda Storry

Literacy Works Editor
Liz Ormiston

Contributors this issue
Michael Hanna, Carla Burke, Shirley St. Denis, Louise Welen, Wilbert Genoves, John Lingard, Harlan Weindenhammer, Gwen Marti, Cathy Ellis, Elizabeth Slater, Sharon Skage, Pam Ridgway, Sylvia Vicq, Brenda Storry, Mary Edwards, Ruth Quiring and ESL students from SIAST Wascana ESL Centre

Cover photo
Courtesy of Regina Open Door Society

Typing and desktop publishing
Lines & Letters

Printing
SIAST Wascana Campus

ISSN Number: 1183-3793

Saskatchewan Literacy Network Charitable Number: 0896225-21

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

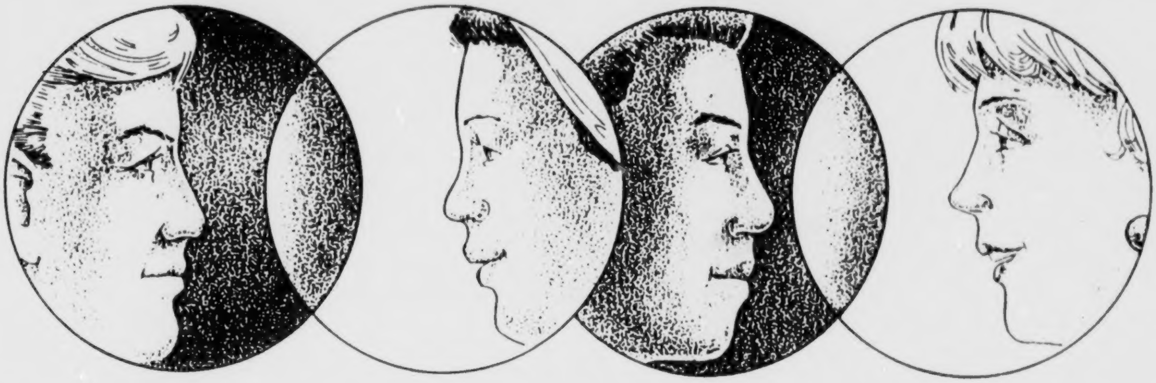
Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

Back issues of Literacy Works available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 1, No. 4	Aboriginal Literacy
Vol. 2, No. 1	Literacy and Health
Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 2	Plain Language
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family Literacy



Contents

EDITORIAL: Good and bad in government's new language training programs by Michael Hanna 3

LINC program allows greater flexibility by Gwen Marti 6

READ Saskatoon provides a variety of services for learners and tutors by Sylvia Vicq 8

Linking programs needed to help newcomers achieve long-term goals by Elizabeth Slater 9

FROM THE PRAIRIE LITERACY INSTITUTE:
  Cross-cultural communication: breaking through barriers of language, thought and movement 11
  Good pronunciation essential when learning English by Pam Ridgway 13
  Thanksgiving exercises: exploring a custom by Mary Edwards 14

SCENES: Bringing together a diverse group of teachers by John Lingard 16

Theatre project gives immigrant and refugee women a voice by Cathy Ellis 18

Adolescent new Canadians face major challenge in high school by Harlan Weindenhammer 20

WRITE ON: New Canadian sees education as key to improving his life by Wilbert Ricardo Genoves 21

A report on the Founding Conference of the Feminist Literacy Workers Network by Brenda F. Storry 22

Gzowski talks of hope and promise at literacy awards dinner by Sharon Skage 25

NETWORK NEWS 26

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK 26

Introducing the Network Staff 27

FL 800 763

We want to take some more programs in English because we need to improve our language for the future life. Future life for us immigrants from other countries means future study, future jobs and a future new life style. Right now it's hard for us to afford to take further English classes as the government has made huge cuts in ESL programs. Also, it is very hard to find jobs. Most employers like to hire people who haven't problems with English.

In a word, we would like to have representatives speak out about our financial situation with all levels of government so that we can get further English study and job training.

James — from China
Jolanta— from Poland

These articles were written by students in an Occupational English class taught by Ruth Quiring at the ESL Centre, Wascana Campus, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST), Regina.

We are the students at SIAST now. We met too many people from different countries who have the same problem with the English language. Everybody had their own way to study English in Canada. Sometimes the students live 2-3 years and more here and didn't have any chance to go to school. More of them waited for an ESL class for a long time. For example, one of us waited one year and at that time, she couldn't go to any school because the government has a law. Other people had a full time job, and the government, again, has a law. Manpower follows that law. Most of the students have families and they must support them. We point to the government which has money for nuclear power plants and doesn't have money for English classes.

Sylvia — from Hong Kong
Oksana — from the Ukraine
Dorota — from Poland

Good and bad in government's new language training programs

By Michael Hanna

In October, 1990, Barbara McDougall, who was then the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration, announced a five-year immigration plan. The part of the plan that addressed the settlement and integration of immigrants was called the Federal Integration Strategy (FIS). One of the most important objectives of the FIS was to "*. . . set new directions for language training and increase funding to make a more flexible range of options accessible to a greater number of immigrants.*" [1]

At the time the FIS was announced, federally funded English as a Second Language (ESL) training options available in Saskatchewan included:

- **Full-Time, Institutional Training (Occupational English)** — In 1990-91, over 90 percent of the federal money available for immigrant language training in Canada was directed to this type of program and approximately half of that money (i.e. 45 percent of the national total) went to support student training and dependent childcare allowances. Occupational English training was restricted to those people who planned to enter the workforce immediately after graduating. All Occupational English classes in Saskatchewan were offered by the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST).
- **Settlement Language Program (SLP)** — This program was restricted to those people who did not plan to enter the workforce after graduating. No training or dependent childcare allowances were available to SLP students although free, on-site childcare and transportation assistance were provided. The majority of students in this program were women with infants or young children. SLP classes were offered in Saskatchewan at the Saskatoon Open Door Society and the Regina Open Door Society.
- **Language at Work (LAW)** — This program offered ESL classes in the workplace. An employer agreed to release non-English speaking employees for a certain amount of time per week to study ESL during work hours. There was one LAW class in Saskatchewan that involved a joint agreement between the Regina Open Door Society and the Regina Inn.

Immigrants who had taken the oath of Canadian citizenship were not eligible for any of these programs.

In January, 1992, Employment and Immigration Canada released the details of its new Immigrant Language Training Policy (ILTP). Instead of the three programs available before, the new policy defines two ESL training options for immigrants: Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC) and Labour Market Language Training (LMLT).

Referral to either LINC or LMLT instruction is made by Employment and Immigration Canada counsellors. Potential ESL students are assessed on the performance of seven tasks which involve speaking, listening, reading and writing (the A-LINC assessment). Following this, the counsellor places the student in one of five levels. Those people who are assessed at Level 1, 2 or 3 are

continued . . .

Good and bad in government's new language training programs *continued*

eligible for LINC training. Those students who are assessed at Level 4 or 5 are eligible for LMLT training.

The LINC program is not employment related. It makes ESL training available to any immigrant regardless of immigration category and regardless of whether he or she will be looking for work after graduating. The LINC program accounts for 80 percent of all the federal money available for immigrant language training in Canada. LINC funds will not be used for student training or dependent childcare allowances. This change in ESL training policy frees up several million dollars nationally to provide language training to more people more quickly. Those immigrants who are receiving Adjustment Assistance, Social Assistance or Unemployment Insurance benefits *will* be able to take LINC training. LINC funding can also allow ESL training providers to offer on-site childcare and transportation assistance to those students who need this support.

The LMLT program is employment related because it provides ESL training which will help immigrants to improve existing job skills or to learn new job skills which are in demand. It accounts for 20 percent of federal ESL training funds. People who have graduated from LINC training or who are assessed at an A-LINC Level 4 or 5 are eligible for LMLT training. The LMLT program will provide training and dependent childcare allowances if no other income support is available.

Those immigrants who have taken the oath of Canadian citizenship are not eligible for LINC funded ESL training but are eligible for LMLT programs.

As with any program intended to meet the needs of several thousand people across Canada, the LINC and LMLT programs have good points and bad points. On the plus side, the change in policy will almost certainly result in a more flexible approach to ESL training delivery on the part of language training providers. This will result in ESL training options that match more closely the needs of those immigrants who require such training. The second benefit of the new policy is its encouragement to develop effective, local ESL training. This means that ESL training providers in any particular location should begin to work more closely with each other to ensure that appropriate training is available. The results of this policy change are evident in both Regina and Saskatoon where community-based coalitions of ESL training providers have established working committees to begin the process of defining effective ways of cooperating in the delivery of this important service.

The new policy, however, is not without problems. It was designed primarily in response to immigrant language training problems which exist in larger cities; most notably Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. In those centres, waiting lists for language training are often longer than one year. In addition, only about 25 percent of immigrants who need ESL or French as a Second Language (FSL) training ever get to classes. The new policy will allow more immigrants in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to take language training more quickly. In Saskatchewan, the new policy will make no difference in the waiting time because under the old policy the maximum delay before a newly arrived immigrant could begin classes was five weeks. There is also virtually no change in the hours of instruction allowed.

Those who are assessed at Level 1 will, of course, need more language training

Good and bad in government's new language training programs

By Michael Hanna

In October, 1990, Barbara McDougall, who was then the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration, announced a five-year immigration plan. The part of the plan that addressed the settlement and integration of immigrants was called the Federal Integration Strategy (FIS). One of the most important objectives of the FIS was to "*. . . set new directions for language training and increase funding to make a more flexible range of options accessible to a greater number of immigrants.*" [1]

At the time the FIS was announced, federally funded English as a Second Language (ESL) training options available in Saskatchewan included:

- **Full-Time, Institutional Training (Occupational English)** — In 1990-91, over 90 percent of the federal money available for immigrant language training in Canada was directed to this type of program and approximately half of that money (i.e. 45 percent of the national total) went to support student training and dependent childcare allowances. Occupational English training was restricted to those people who planned to enter the workforce immediately after graduating. All Occupational English classes in Saskatchewan were offered by the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST).
- **Settlement Language Program (SLP)** — This program was restricted to those people who did not plan to enter the workforce after graduating. No training or dependent childcare allowances were available to SLP students although free, on-site childcare and transportation assistance were provided. The majority of students in this program were women with infants or young children. SLP classes were offered in Saskatchewan at the Saskatoon Open Door Society and the Regina Open Door Society.
- **Language at Work (LAW)** — This program offered ESL classes in the workplace. An employer agreed to release non-English speaking employees for a certain amount of time per week to study ESL during work hours. There was one LAW class in Saskatchewan that involved a joint agreement between the Regina Open Door Society and the Regina Inn.

Immigrants who had taken the oath of Canadian citizenship were not eligible for any of these programs.

In January, 1992, Employment and Immigration Canada released the details of its new Immigrant Language Training Policy (ILTP). Instead of the three programs available before, the new policy defines two ESL training options for immigrants: Language Instruction for New Canadians (LINC) and Labour Market Language Training (LMLT).

Referral to either LINC or LMLT instruction is made by Employment and Immigration Canada counsellors. Potential ESL students are assessed on the performance of seven tasks which involve speaking, listening, reading and writing (the A-LINC assessment). Following this, the counsellor places the student in one of five levels. Those people who are assessed at Level 1, 2 or 3 are

continued . . .

Good and bad in government's new language training programs *continued*

eligible for LINC training. Those students who are assessed at Level 4 or 5 are eligible for LMLT training.

The LINC program is not employment related. It makes ESL training available to any immigrant regardless of immigration category and regardless of whether he or she will be looking for work after graduating. The LINC program accounts for 80 percent of all the federal money available for immigrant language training in Canada. LINC funds will not be used for student training or dependent childcare allowances. This change in ESL training policy frees up several million dollars nationally to provide language training to more people more quickly. Those immigrants who are receiving Adjustment Assistance, Social Assistance or Unemployment Insurance benefits *will* be able to take LINC training. LINC funding can also allow ESL training providers to offer on-site childcare and transportation assistance to those students who need this support.

The LMLT program is employment related because it provides ESL training which will help immigrants to improve existing job skills or to learn new job skills which are in demand. It accounts for 20 percent of federal ESL training funds. People who have graduated from LINC training or who are assessed at an A-LINC Level 4 or 5 are eligible for LMLT training. The LMLT program will provide training and dependent childcare allowances if no other income support is available.

Those immigrants who have taken the oath of Canadian citizenship are not eligible for LINC funded ESL training but are eligible for LMLT programs.

As with any program intended to meet the needs of several thousand people across Canada, the LINC and LMLT programs have good points and bad points. On the plus side, the change in policy will almost certainly result in a more flexible approach to ESL training delivery on the part of language training providers. This will result in ESL training options that match more closely the needs of those immigrants who require such training. The second benefit of the new policy is its encouragement to develop effective, local ESL training. This means that ESL training providers in any particular location should begin to work more closely with each other to ensure that appropriate training is available. The results of this policy change are evident in both Regina and Saskatoon where community-based coalitions of ESL training providers have established working committees to begin the process of defining effective ways of cooperating in the delivery of this important service.

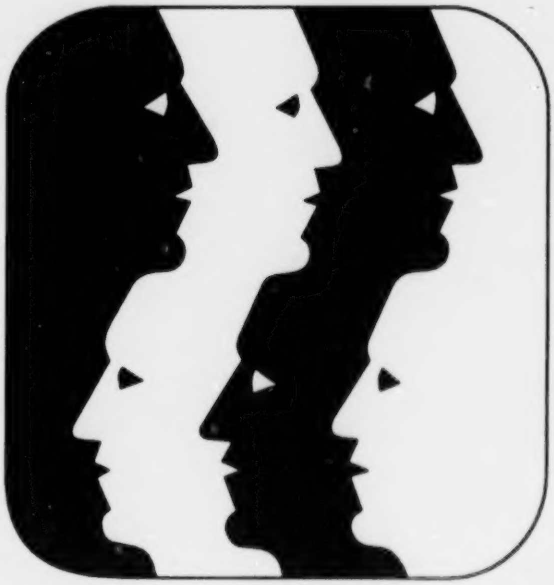
The new policy, however, is not without problems. It was designed primarily in response to immigrant language training problems which exist in larger cities; most notably Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. In those centres, waiting lists for language training are often longer than one year. In addition, only about 25 percent of immigrants who need ESL or French as a Second Language (FSL) training ever get to classes. The new policy will allow more immigrants in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal to take language training more quickly. In Saskatchewan, the new policy will make no difference in the waiting time because under the old policy the maximum delay before a newly arrived immigrant could begin classes was five weeks. There is also virtually no change in the hours of instruction allowed.

Those who are assessed at Level 1 will, of course, need more language training that those assessed at Level 3. On average, however, the LINC program will allow approximately 600 hours of training per student.[2] This is approximately the same number of hours that were available under the Occupational English or Settlement Language Programs.

It is also possible that fewer immigrants to Saskatchewan will be able to take ESL training because of the absence of training allowances for any LINC students. Many family or private sponsors used to depend on the training allowance to cover the costs of sponsorship. Under the LINC program, this is no longer possible. Given the new policy's commitment to providing more appropriate and flexible ESL training options, however, it is hoped that the needs of these people can be met through new types of programs — evening or weekend classes, workplace-based training, smaller neighbourhood classes, and so on.

The shift in funding from employment-related ESL training to general ESL training may also cause some problems. Remember that LINC accounts for 80 percent of federal language training dollars and that the LMLT program accounts for the remaining 20 percent. This means that for every five people who graduate from LINC programs, only one will be able to access LMLT training. Further, given that the LMLT program does support training allowances and dependent childcare allowances, this figure of one in five is likely to be closer to one in 10. In the absence of any provincial support for adult ESL training, people who graduate from the LINC program will have few options for further ESL training.

The problem of employment related training for immigrants is made even more difficult because the funding source which has traditionally been used to provide such training (i.e. Consolidated Revenue Fund or CRF) has been reduced by about $200,000,000 across Canada in the past two years.



In Saskatchewan, the change in language training policy is likely to have little impact in the length of time that new immigrants will have to wait before getting into some form of ESL training. Its more flexible approach should ensure that those immigrants who need training will be able to access some form of program. The new policy may result in programming that provides fewer hours of training and will almost certainly result in less employment-related training for immigrants. It is hoped that the community-based committees which have been established to implement the provisions of the LINC and LMLT programs will continue to work together to find ways to take advantage of the opportunities in the new policy while continuing to identify effective means to address its shortcomings.

continued . . .

Good and bad in government's new language training programs *continued*

LINC programs are currently available at:

- SIAST Wascana (Regina) Campus — full and part-time programs for those who do not require childcare.
- Regina Open Door society Inc. — full and part-time programs for those requiring childcare, for the elderly and for the disabled.
- University of Regina (Extension Division) — LINC training for people with overseas university degrees.
- SIAST Estey School (Saskatoon) — full time programs, on site childcare available.
- Saskatoon Open Door Society Inc. — part time programs, on site childcare available.
- Yorkton Open Door Society Inc. — part-time programs, on site childcare available.

Endnotes

1. *Annual Report to Parliament; Immigration Plan for 1991-1995.* p. 13. October 1990
2. *New Immigrant Language Training Policy: Questions and Answers on Immigrant Language Training.* p. 3. January 1992

***Michael Hanna** is executive director of the Saskatoon Open Door Society.*

***Editor's note:** Because of the amount of background information necessary to have a good understanding of the new government programs for new Canadians, this editorial is significantly longer than the editorials and articles which normally appear in* Literacy Works.

LINC program allows greater flexibility

By Gwen Marti

The basic ability to communicate in one of Canada's official languages is often the essential first step towards successful integration for immigrants and refugees. LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada) is a new language training program for immigrants and refugees funded by Canada Employment and Immigration. LINC will provide immigrants with the basic communication skills that are essential to function in our society. All permanent residents who require basic language training will be eligible, regardless of their immigrant category or whether they intend to enter the labour force.

Basic language training has been available for a number of years now, but what is different about the LINC program is the flexibility it allows. LINC is intended to encourage new programming which will be more accessible and relevant in meeting the needs of individual learners. For instance, as well as full time classroom training, more flexible options may include courses or programs which are neighbourhood-based, part-time, weekend, self study, tutored, linked to skills training, or even delivered through distance learning technology.

The challenge for all of us who work with immigrants is to ensure that newcomers to Saskatchewan will benefit from the best language training available and that the training meets their individual needs. The cooperative efforts of many different groups and individuals will be needed to meet the needs of newcomers in their communities. This has already begun in Regina, where language providers met to identify language training needs and determine how they can work together to provide training options for immigrants.

Change always brings questions and uncertainties and this new program is no exception. The fact that training allowances will no longer be paid under the LINC program has caused concern that some newcomers will be unable to participate. However, most immigrants previously receiving training allowances during language training were government or privately-sponsored refugees. Government-sponsored refugees will continue to receive income support through the Adjustment Assistance Program. Private and family sponsors will be asked to respect the commitment they have made to provide basic support, particularly during the first year in Canada. Immigrants who are eligible will continue to receive Social Assistance or Unemployment Insurance when attending language training. The LINC program also has provisions for the language provider to offer childcare and transportation services to those who require it.

Under LINC there is no maximum amount of training to which a client is entitled other than the criteria that a client cannot be sponsored beyond three years from the initial program or beyond attainment of citizenship. The goal is to achieve an equity of outcome. Therefore, some people with special needs, such as illiteracy or a limited knowledge, will be eligible for more training while clients with some knowledge will require less training to achieve the desired level of competency.

This is only a brief overview of some aspects of the program. As mentioned earlier, LINC provides the opportunity for many innovative approaches to language training as long as the needs of the individual newcomers are met.

For more detailed information contact your local Canada Employment Centre which is responsible for delivering the LINC program in Saskatchewan.

***Gwen Marti** is a Program Specialist with the Regional Immigration Office in Regina, and is the Saskatchewan Regional Office Coordinator for the LINC program.*

READ Saskatoon provides a variety of services for learners and tutors

By Sylvia Vicq

READ Saskatoon, a community-based, registered charitable organization, has been offering free help with basic reading and writing to adults in Saskatoon since 1979, as well as specialized programming for Native people and youth. READ Saskatoon also provides tutors to the Regional Psychiatric Centre. All tutoring is done by trained volunteers.

READ Saskatoon has no office, classrooms or learning centre but is able to provide basic one-to-one programming only through the cooperation of the Saskatoon Public Library. The library provides space for tutoring and tutor training and maintains an extensive collection of materials, both print and audio-visual, for use by tutors and learners. The highest demand for these resources comes from ESL learners as reported by library staff.

READ Saskatoon does not receive funding to provide programs specifically for ESL learners. A variety of ESL programming is offered by several other agencies and institutions in Saskatoon — some free and some not. About one-third of learners registered with READ are ESL learners who have already participated in some of these other programs and want more language training. READ Saskatoon requires that the ESL learner be able to speak some English before registration.

ESL learners registered with READ have literacy needs ranging from learning to read a report card to preparing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). These learners have a variety of educational backgrounds as well. Since READ offers literacy help and not specific English language training, it is not always possible to meet the diverse needs of the ESL learners.

Many ESL learners want help only with pronunciation and are not necessarily concerned about reading and writing. Many have jobs and families to cope with and there is little time left for English practice. Some are unable to speak English between weekly meetings and, as a result, both tutor and learner become frustrated by lack of progress. Many ESL learners require childcare which READ is not able to provide. The alterative — in-home tutoring — is more difficult to provide as most tutors prefer to meet at the library. Some ESL learners request almost daily meetings with the tutor which is not possible to do with volunteers. Sometimes an ESL learner requests help from several agencies at the same time.

Basic tutor training provided by READ Saskatoon does not include a specific ESL component. Instead, READ provides support to the tutors with ESL learners by suggestions about materials, resources and techniques on an individual basis. READ tutors regularly attend Saskatoon Open Door Society trainings. The two agencies have co-sponsored trainings and READ Saskatoon has also offered in-service ESL training with Saskatchewan Literacy Network support.

Implementation of the new federal language training programs may mean increased demand for services from existing literacy programs such as READ Saskatoon. Cutbacks in operating funds for literacy programs may mean reduced service for both literacy and ESL learners.

***Sylvia Vicq**, a former high school teacher, has been the literacy coordinator for READ Saskatoon since 1984. She has been an active member of the Saskatoon Literacy Coalition and was a recipient of a Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit in 1991.*

The mailing address is:
READ Saskatoon
P.O. Box 7888
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 4R6
Telephone: (306) 652-5448.

Linking programs needed to help newcomers achieve long-term goals

By Elizabeth Slater

When immigrants first come to Regina, they are offered language training within their first year. They have the option of attending classes at either The Regina Open Door Society, or at the English as a Second Language Centre, run by the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST).

These programs offer survival English to newcomers. When immigrants complete the program, they can complete a job application form, make an appointment with a doctor, and perform other essential tasks that are necessary for independent living in a foreign country.

With these skills, many newcomers manage to find employment in the service industry, or janitorial positions. Most of them are grateful for the minimum ages that go with these positions. After a period of time, however, they usually begin to look for ways to improve their standard of living. Newcomers who were skilled workers or professionals in their country of origin and want to work in their trade or profession in Canada, begin to set new goals for themselves.

For many newcomers, there are so many obstacles that seem formidable. Many newcomers are also parents, with all the worries of keeping a family together in a strange land. In many cases they work at several low-paying jobs just

continued . . .

Linking programs needed to help newcomers *continued*

to survive. Because of lack of funding, they must attend evening classes to upgrade their skills. If they follow this route, it can take many years to achieve their goals.

Last winter, I worked as an instructor in a Communications 5-12 evening upgrading program. One of my students was a woman from Poland who had moved to Regina three years ago. She had followed the normal route of attending ESL classes, and she was working at two part-time jobs in the service industry. She had been an accountant in Poland, and she decided that she wanted to work in her profession in Canada.

To do this she needed to upgrade her communications skills and then study for the General Education Development Test (GED). If she achieved the required standard, she could then apply for admission to one of the accounting courses offered by SIAST.

When I met her, she had just started her second year of evening classes and was hoping to enter the GED program the following year.

She, as well as other students, expressed a need for a special linking program between ESL and Adult Basic Education (ABE). The existing preparation programs are geared to the needs of our Canadian students. ESL students have special needs that are not being met in these programs.

What is required is an individualized program that allows for the differences in learning styles and goals of these newcomers. Immigrants come from cultures that are often completely different from our Canadian culture. Therefore, a successful linking program should have an instructor who has experience working with people from different cultural settings. Many ESL students have problems with grammar, vocabulary, and sentence structure. The program should be flexible enough to allow the students to focus on their weaknesses and achieve their goals in the shortest time possible. Special ESL materials and resources should be available to provide quality instruction.

ESL students also experience difficulty when they are given the standardized Canadian Basic Skills Tests that are used to evaluate their progress. Often they don't understand the directions and thus don't understand what is required of them. The fact that these tests are timed puts added stress on these students. A linking program should include strategies for successful testing.

A good linking program would save valuable time and money and many more immigrants would experience success in achieving their goals.

***Elizabeth Slater** taught ESL for eight years and has just moved to teaching adult literacy and upgrading in the Literacy Learning Centre at the new SIAST 8th Avenue North School in Regina. She says the program in which she is now teaching is a step towards the kind of linking program she discusses in this article.*

The following three articles are based on seminars presented at the Prairie Literacy Institute held in Saskatoon in July, 1992. The Institute was funded by a grant from the National Literacy Secretariat and was jointly planned by the Literacy Workers' Alliance of Manitoba, the Literacy Coordinators of Alberta and the Saskatchewan Literacy Network. Participants were very enthusiastic about the Institute and we are hopeful we can hold another Institute in the future and include the Northwest Territories and the Yukon in the planning.

Cross-cultural communication:

breaking through barriers of language, thought and movement

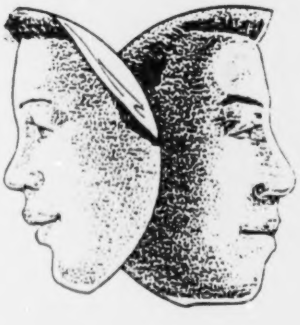
Success in working in a cross-cultural setting requires that professionals and volunteers have a knowledge and understanding of the many factors, including cultural differences, that may influence relationships in such settings. While "cultural differences" are often the cause of some conflicts and problems in cross-cultural work, other factors should also be considered. An awareness of one's own interpersonal abilities, role in one's own culture and one's own value system, an honest assessment of one's skills and the ability to accept different ways of coping with issues are necessary. Factors including poverty, racism, sexism and institutional policies need to be taken into account. Considering all these different factors, the stumbling blocks to effective intercultural communication can be identified and examined.

Stumbling blocks to intercultural communication

1. Language difficulties such as vocabulary, syntax, usage and idioms.
2. Non-verbal differences including hand gestures, facial expressions, touching, spatial relationships use of silence and pauses and eye contact.
3. Preconceptions and stereotypes including prejudice and racism.
4. Tendency to judge and evaluate rather than observe and try to understand.
5. Differing value orientations that relate to self, society and nature, family, human nature and the supernatural.
6. High anxiety that is result of the adaptation process and the complex helper/helpee role.
7. Unawareness of other ways of presenting argument and logic.

Suggestions for counteracting stumbling blocks

1. Realize that the stumbling blocks may be culturally controlled and largely beyond your awareness. Make a point of looking for signs of the stumbling blocks in yourself and others.
2. Allow extra time to communicate effectively, to listen carefully, to paraphrase and to ask for confirmation, and to establish rapport.
3. Be aware of your own language use. Speak simply and clearly and avoid idiomatic expressions, abbreviations, acronyms and technical jargon.



continued . . .

Cross-cultural communication continued

4. Be aware that you may have a natural tendency to judge.
5. Try to reduce tension and your own psychological defences. What may seem logical and straightforward to you may not be to other people.
6. Be alert to varying interpretations of what you say and do.
7. Check everyday assumptions. You and another person may not share the same expectations and assumptions about what is correct in a particular situation.
8. State your own assumptions. Explain the situation and purpose from your point of view at each stage of the discussion.
9. At times, it is appropriate to ask very explicit questions and state your conclusions fully.
10. When appropriate use indirect methods of communication such as relevant stories, illustrations and examples. Use mutually acceptable, cross-culturally sensitive individuals as intermediaries in difficult or sensitive cases.
11. Be aware of the non-verbal communication that is culturally specific.
12. Remember the similarities you share and talk openly about the differences.
13. Learn more about the adaptation process and the other person's own history.
14. Consult with agencies and people who have experience in cross-cultural communication.
15. Be aware what the appropriate responding style would vary according to the situation. The five basic listening and responding styles are: interpretive, supportive, probing, understanding and evaluative.
16. Have the courage to risk change in your values and perceptions.
17. There will be situations that you may never understand.

Many of these suggestions are interconnected and may be difficult to separate due to the complexity of the communication process, particularly in a cross-cultural context.

References

An Introduction to Intercultural Communication, John C. Condon and Fathi Yousef, New York, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1975.

Intercultural Communication, Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter, Belmont, California, Wadsworth Publishing Company, 1991.

The McDonald Series: *The McDonald Guide to Communication Across Cultures*, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Communications International, Inc., 1991.

The Cultural Awareness Hierarchy: A Model for Achieving Excellence in Crosscultural Work Settings, Peter Muniz and Bob Chasnoff.

Cross Talk — A Study of Cross-Cultural Communication, John J. Gumperz, T.C. Jupp and Celia Robers, Cambridge, National Centre of Industrial Language Training, 1979.

This article is based on a Cross-cultural Communication Workshop developed and presented by ***Carla Burke, Shirley St. Denis*** *and* ***Louise Welen*** *of The Saskatoon Open Door Society. SODS is an Immigrant Settlement Agency that provides services and programs to immigrant newcomers and offers cross-cultural training and resources to the general community. More information about SODS and copies of the workshop handouts are available from:*

Saskatoon Open Door Society
52 – 158 2nd Avenue N.
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 2B3
Tel: (306) 653-4464
Fax: (306) 653-4404

Good pronunciation essential when learning English

By Pam Ridgway

People learning a new language may assume that the mastery of grammar and the acquisition of an adequate vocabulary are all-important, and that correct pronunciation is a comparatively minor problem which may be solved simply by exposure to native speakers. In fact, good pronunciation is truly essential for effective communication and requires not only careful study of the new speech patterns but an awareness of the influence of the individual's native language speech patterns.

It is essential first of all for learners to overcome the sense of awkwardness and inadequacy which inevitably accompanies early attempts to cope with strange sounds and idioms. One approach which often helps is make-believe. Learners imagine they *are* English speakers. A major problem, especially in learning English, is that spelling is an unreliable guide to pronunciation and learners who study the written language first easily acquire incorrect speech habits. These can best be overcome by the systematic study and practice of isolated sounds of English speech, preferably though not necessarily with the aid of phonetic symbols, then by further exercises highlighting the contrast between specific English sounds and their nearest equivalents in the native language. A brief discussion of the different categories of sounds — fricatives, nasals, liquids, etc. — may help to clarify the difficulties.

An absolute prerequisite for the acquisition of a new language which is all too often taken for granted is the education of the ear. Most people need to be trained to listen to sounds with full attention and this can only be done through careful practice. The teacher's role is to provide the required opportunities. For the sounds to become habitual it is essential to have the learner repeat them many times. Since most of the drills will have to be done in the learners' own time, they must be taught to monitor their attempts accurately and reliably. This can be done by having learners pronounce specific sounds and then asking them to comment on their performance. It is helpful if the teacher can provide handouts of correction techniques for particularly troublesome sounds. Eventually not just sounds, but words, then complete sentences, must be practised in private as often as necessary.

The following sequence is suggested for the use of recorded tapes in home practice:

1. Listen to the entire passage while reading the script.
2. Close the book and listen repeatedly to the words until an exact auditory impression of the sound is formed.
3. Practise imitating exactly each word during the pause.
4. Open the book and tape your own recording, then listen to compare your pronunciation with that of the speaker.

Other pronunciation problems which should be addressed are the concepts of voice projection, pronunciation of all sounds within words, and, most importantly, stress and intonation. Practice at this stage should not only target sounds but also the rhythm, phrasing and characteristic "tune" of the language. One effective way to get learners to concentrate on stress is to invite them to accompany each stressed syllable with a visible gesture.

Finally, the newly acquired sounds must be integrated into the general flow of

continued . . .

Good pronunciation essential when learning English *continued*

speech in such a way that *conscious attention* to them is no longer necessary. Various means of promoting the transfer to conversational language include: taping of poems, dialogues, etc. chosen by the speaker; brief talks on topics of particular interest; a final speech or prepared presentation. Because habitual learning is a gradual process, it is useful to have the learners record a "before and after" tape of a reading passage so that they can have a clear idea of their progress.

***Pam Ridgway**, B.A., M.Sc., has obtained degrees in English literature and Speech-Language Pathology, as well as a diploma in radio broadcasting. She assesses and treats a wide variety of speech disorders in children, and is a certified instructor of the Compton P-ESL (Pronouncing English as a Second Language) Program, which is designed to assist foreign-born individuals in improving their English pronunciation skills.*

Thanksgiving exercises: exploring a custom

Saskatoon ESL instructor **Mary Edwards** led the workshop, "Strategies for ESL Learners" at the Prairie Literacy Institute. Following are a series of exercises on Thanksgiving which she presented as part of the workshop. We hope instructors of various ESL classes will find these useful in their work.

LEVEL: Basic

TOOLS:

- graphic of Thanksgiving Dinner (Norman Rockwell style)
- reconstructed story with controlled vocabulary of Thanksgiving in Canada (no Pilgrim Fathers please!)
- daily newspaper

GROUPING: whole class or small groups

PROCESS:

- establish/stabilize a vocabulary for beginning students
- locate vocabulary through the use of a newspaper/flyers, etc.
- discuss what the students' children are doing for Thanksgiving at school
- present the Thanksgiving story with controlled vocabulary and reading exercises
- do cloze exercises (leave out every seventh word in a sentence or paragraph, but never leave out the first word of a sentence), dictation, etc.
- answer comprehension questions about the story

OUTCOME: Students are learning about this new culture. They can choose to like/dislike this particular custom. New vocabulary has meaning in respect to a custom.

COMMENTS: This particular lesson plan allows students to "zero in" on the disciplines of reading and writing. It gives variety to the day and allows for an informal introduction to a newspaper at a beginning level. Outings, such as a shopping trip for turkey dinner ingredients, can be included. The video "How to Cook a Turkey," available from Kelsey Campus, SIAST, Saskatoon, will be useful if you wish to have your students actually cook a turkey dinner. Phone the Kelsey Film Library, 933-6418 and ask for Ethel Crosthwaite.

TIME FRAME: Thematic approach from a few days to a couple of weeks.

From the Prairie Literacy Institute

Thanksgiving stories (in order of difficulty)

Story #1: The Food of Thanksgiving

Most Canadians spend Thanksgiving Day with their families. Usually they will gather at the home of their parents; or, sometimes they go to another city or town to be with relatives. Some people choose to eat out at a restaurant.

There are traditional foods Canadians eat on Thanksgiving Day. Have you heard about the following foods?

1. turkey
2. turkey dressing
3. turkey gravy
4. mashed potatoes
5. turnips
6. pumpkin pie (with whipped cream)
7. whipped cream

I'm getting very hungry thinking about all of this good food. Are you going to try these new foods? Be brave, I'm sure you will like them.

New words: spend, gather, to eat out

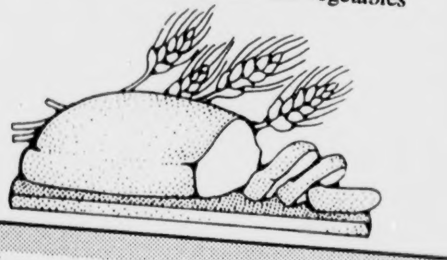
Story #2: Customs and People

Samuel de Champlain and a group of French settlers came to Nova Scotia. Their first winter was bad because they had little food, and a lot of sickness. The second year was better because they were able to plant crops of wheat, barley and oats. By autumn, there was plenty of food to eat. A club was formed. It was called the Order of Good Cheer. People visited each other, shared their food, and spent many happy times together. They gave thanks to God for a happy new beginning in their new country, Canada.

More and more new Canadians came to Canada. They brought their special ways of giving thanks for the harvests. New traditions came from these new immigrants. These new ways to celebrate have made the Canadian Thanksgiving celebration what it is today.

New words:

Samuel de Champlain — a French explorer
Settlers — new people in a country
Crops — grains and vegetables that were planted in the soil
Plenty — a lot of
Order of Good Cheer — a club of settlers
Traditions — customs
Harvests — food from the land after picking or harvesting the grains and vegetables



Story #3: Thanksgiving Day

It is important that Canadians, "new" and "old," know about our history. It will soon be Thanksgiving Day, and the tradition is to have a special dinner on that day. Do you know about our first Thanksgiving Day? I will tell you about it.

Martin Frobisher, an explorer, came to Canada in 1578 and stayed in the eastern Arctic. It was he and his crew who celebrated our first formal day of Thanksgiving.

The celebration then came to Nova Scotia in the 1750s, and the citizens of Halifax had a special day of Thanksgiving to celebrate the end of the Seven Year War in 1763. Also, many people travelled West to new places in Canada, and they took this custom with them. Many more people celebrated this special day.

In 1879, Parliament declared November 6 as a day of Thanksgiving. It was celebrated as a national holiday rather than a religious holiday. This date of November 6 was observed on later and earlier dates. Then, on January 31, 1957, our Parliament made the second Monday in October the official THANKSGIVING DAY.

Happy Thanksgiving Day!

New words: explorer, crew, formal citizens, celebrate, declare, Parliament

Adapted from "We Celebrate the Harvest," a Bobbie Kalman Book, Crabtree Publishing Company, Toronto, Ontario, 1986

SCENES:
Bringing together a diverse group of teachers

By John Lingard

You may not have heard of the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES) because we're a fairly small organization (about 120 members at present) and we've not been around very long. In fact, we're only 12 years old. On the other hand, we think we're doing a useful job and would like to hear from anyone who can help us do more of it.

So what is this job, exactly? Teachers who were working with students learning English in this province found it difficult to meet other teachers doing the same job. There are so many differences in teaching and learning English that the jobs aren't really the same at all. Despite this contradiction, SCENES was born and is growing into a healthy adolescent.

The students we work with are learning English at different ages and in different institutions. For example, some SCENES members are teaching in elementary schools while others are working in universities or colleges. Students and their teachers live in many different regions of Saskatchewan. While many SCENES members live in large centres like Regina or Saskatoon, there are others working in communities all over the province. This range is shown by our motto ("From Prairie to Pine") and our logo which shows a grain elevator standing among pine trees.

Another example of the differences is the type of English teaching involved. To simplify things, we say that our members are ESL teachers. This means that our students are immigrants to Canada who are usually learning English after they have learned one or more other languages in another country. Such students are learning English as a second language so that they can live, study, and work in Canada as independent people. But there are also SCENES members working with English as a Second Dialect (ESD) students, which usually means Indian or Métis people wanting to learn standard English in addition to an Indian language or a non-standard dialect of English. Most of these students also want this skill to increase their opportunities for education or employment. Finally, some SCENES members work with English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students who are usually staying in Canada for only a short period of time before they return home.

The literacy problems which our students have are often quite different from those which Canadian people (and others who learned English as a first language) may have. Most ESL students have learned to read and write in another language before they come to Canada and start to learn English. They have to work on the skills of listening and speaking which are not usually a problem for

SCENES

SASKATCHEWAN COUNCIL FOR
EDUCATORS OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Canadian literacy students. Many ESL students have to learn the Roman alphabet — some also have to learn to read and write from left to right — before they can begin to tackle more predictable problems such as spelling. And then others have more complex literacy needs, such as the specialized vocabulary for engineering or medicine.

Because we are a voluntary group, we have few resources. We don't offer ESL teaching as an organization, but we can put people in touch with ESL/D teachers and classes throughout Saskatchewan. SCENES recently produced a handbook detailing the different classes available in the province. If you would like a copy, please contact the SLN who can also put you in touch with a SCENES member in your area if you'd like to find out more about our work.

***John Lingard** has taught ESL at Walter Murray Collegiate in Saskatoon since 1982. Prior to this, he taught in England, Jamaica, and Papua New Guinea. He is currently Vice-President of SCENES.*

English as a Second Language/Dialect Bibliography

A comprehensive bibliography on English as a Second Language/Dialect is available from the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES). The bibliography lists all material published between 1970 and 1989 and available through the Saskatchewan interlibrary loan network. It includes books dealing with the theory and practice of ESL/D teaching and learning, as well as texts for K-12 students and adults, readers, cassette tapes and reference material.

The bibliography is available from:
SCENES, ESL Centre, Campion College 121
University of Regina
Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 5M4
or contact your local library.

Theatre project gives immigrant and refugee women a voice

By Cathy Ellis

The Immigrant Women's Drama Group in Regina uses popular theatre as a tool to promote cross-cultural understanding, to help immigrant and refugee women to express themselves, and to improve literacy among members of the group. Scenes, which we have developed in a cooperative way, show what life was like for members and their families in their countries of origin before they came to Canada, and some of their experiences as immigrants here.

We usually give an introduction to our presentations in a spontaneous manner. Some of the comments which group members have given are:

Popular theatre scenes . . .

"Our theatre group gives us a chance to show Canadian-born people our experiences as new immigrants."

"I can finally have a voice."

"We get confidence to speak in public, and to speak to Canadians."

"I can pour out some of my sadness at having to leave my homeland."

"We can show topics which are hard to talk about, but can be expressed with popular theatre techniques."

Sometimes people ask us who writes the scripts for our plays. Actually, all the ideas in the plays have come from the real life experiences of the immigrant women. The scripts evolve during the practices with all participants having a chance to add or change the lines, although the person who has lived the scene usually gets the final say. During the practices there is lots of opportunity to practice English, and to put English phrases into real life scenarios.

Some members of the group begin with little or no English. In the beginning they have mostly action roles, but as their English improves, their roles grow. Being a part of the drama group also helps them to cope with the loneliness and isolation which is a common problem for new immigrants. I and one other member of the group are Canadian-born. We often play the part of the "Canadian" in the play. I enjoy learning about each woman's life experiences, and appreciate the knowledge I am gaining about multiculturalism and racism. I am confronting racist ideas in my culture and myself, and am finding some positive changes within myself.

One of the best parts of our theatre presentation comes after the play when we divide the audience into groups and we go into the groups to discuss the ideas presented in the play. This allows the audience to take part in the event in an active way. We use some of the following discussion questions: What were some of the main ideas presented in the play? What did you see and feel? Discuss similar experiences you have had in your life. What are some solutions to the problems shown in the play? All of these ideas give our group good practice in conversation and exchange of ideas with the audience. It is also very heartening for us to know that we have had an impact on the people with whom we are trying to communicate.

We have performed for various classes at the University, for students at the nursing school at SIAST, for conferences and meetings. We have concentrated on such themes as cross-cultural communication, employment equity, development issues, and racism. We have received generous funding from the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation, and Secretary of State. We have shared skills and ideas with other groups of immigrant women in the province, and with other popular theatre groups. We hope to keep learning about theatre, improving the group's literacy skills, and make some positive changes in peoples' attitudes toward immigrants and their situations.

. . . from the Immigrant Women's Drama Group of Regina.

For more information about Immigrant Women's Drama Project, please call Immigrant Women of Saskatchewan at (306) 359-6514.

***Cathy Ellis** has six years cross-cultural experience working as a midwife in Mexico and Central America. She has been involved in popular theatre groups in Regina for five years, and helped to form the Immigrant Women's Drama Group.*

Adolescent new Canadians face major challenge in high school

By Harlan Weindenhammer

Functional literacy is only one among many challenges that second language speakers face in high school. Adolescent new Canadians struggle with definitions of identity and purpose that face all young adults. In addition to learning a new language, they must adjust to a new culture and climate. They must learn new concepts, theories, ideas and facts in a new language. Some school boards are prepared to acknowledge the enormity of this challenge by providing English as a Second Language services to new Canadians. It is less commonly recognized that many First Nations students meet similar challenges.

Second language speakers must adapt to a system that is designed and maintained for native speakers. Standards of achievement and correctness that are set to evaluate native speakers fairly are far beyond the proficiency of even intermediate ESL students. Most high school ESL students respond daily to excessive, unequal and even impossible demands upon their language skills. The deficiency of their language is especially obvious in literacy tasks because content is almost always printed and evaluation is most often done through written tests.

Evaluation most often measures error. In written language, this focus highlights the degree to which the standard of native comprehension and expression is not met. As well, our system demands originality. Copying from a source is equated with cheating and plagiarism. The ESL students' need for models and outlines is in conflict with the system's value of originality and self-expression. Native speakers require variety to maintain their interest. The amount of material covered in many content classes is beyond what second language learners can absorb with enjoyment.

The Department of Education could increase the value of ESL courses by granting them credit. School boards could provide free high school classes beyond the present limit of age 21 for older students who are just beginning in English. Educators can accommodate the needs of high school ESL students in three fundamental ways:

1. Recognizing the value of interlanguage and the universal human ability to acquire language by evaluating meaning and content rather than form and correctness.
2. Providing models, accepting quoted responses and permitting proofreading to permit second language learners to achieve without the stigma of cheating.
3. Relieving the struggle that ESL students have in reading comprehension by promoting vocabulary development in context and limiting the amount of material to be read.

In spite of the many unequal challenges that face second language speakers in high school, many learners succeed and some triumph. The first element in their success is diligence to a degree that would astonish most first language students — a daily routine of four to six hours of homework. But, the most dedicated learners would not excel without the support of sympathetic, flexible, sensitive, and intelligent teachers. Above all, considering the challenges from both perspectives, teaching and learning, my experience has led me to genuine wonder and respect for human intelligence and our natural ability to acquire language.

Harlan Weidenhammer, B.A., M.Ed. (Reading) teaches ESL to grades 9 to 12 at Mount Royal Collegiate, Saskatoon and ESL methods in the Department of Curriculum Studies, College of Education, University of Saskatchewan as a sessional lecturer.

Write On!

New Canadian sees education as key to improving his life

By Wilbert Ricardo Genoves

Learning English as a second language was not in my dreams until I arrived in Canada nine years ago. Although I knew some words from taking English in secondary school, it wasn't my favourite subject.

I came to Canada in June, 1983, from El Salvador and have lived in Swift Current since. The local community college has been my teaching institution then and now.

When I look back and remember some of the funny and sometimes embarrassing situations, I can see how much my English has improved. So, a lot of my learning takes place in the community and meeting people.

One of my first humorous incidents happened a few months after I arrived. Canadian friends invited me over for coffee and trying to make some conversation, they asked if we have bears in El Salvador. I said yes and went on saying the different brands and tastes of the beers we have, because I had misunderstood the word bear for beer!

As a student I have participated in the formation of the local learners support group, the planning of a couple of rallies, and attended various conferences in and out of Saskatchewan. All these activities have given me more knowledge of the language, experiences in life and the best new friends.

To live in a rural community, far from the larger centres, means that to improve my English I have to do a lot of self learning, look for a tutor and be active with the learners' support group and participate in other activities. Now that my English has improved enough I've taken a couple of classes from the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) with satisfying results and I will take others in the near future. My goal is to go back to school as a full time student. Education is the only way to improve my life.

Now that I can function in English I enjoy life much more. I have access to more information that I can complement with my language, Spanish or vice versa. Until now I have absorbed the English as well as the culture and hope to do that for as long as I live in my new home, Canada.

Wilbert Genoves *studies part-time at the Cypress Hills Regional College in Swift Current. He is an active participant in the Swift Current Learners' Group, and a member of the board of directors of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.*

A report on the Founding Conference of the Feminist Literacy Workers Network

Vancouver, British Columbia, May 15-17, 1992

By Brenda F. Storry

Since the very beginning of my association with the literacy network, many doors of opportunity have opened for me. One door provided me the chance to represent the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at the Feminist Literacy Workers Network (FLWN) Conference.

Friday, May 15, 1992

I arrived, tired but excited, at the UBC Campus. I had the whole day to look around, walk and relax. The opening ceremony began at 7 p.m. I was very impressed with the representation of women from all across the country, each one with ideas and stories to share. We were entertained by a local group of three women called Reijingu Horumonzu Taiko group.

After meeting many interesting ladies, I retired to my 17th floor room at the Walter Gage Residence. The view was wonderful. I had never before heard the word empowering, but the combination of events leading to my look out over the ocean and the city made me feel empowered.

Saturday, May 16, 1992

The schedule lead me to breakfast where once again I found the opportunity to meet some more of the women. Then on to Discussion #1. I participated in a discussion on women's ways of learning. Many questions were raised in the discussion. We came to the conclusion that in order for women to learn they must be motivated. Also, they need a safe environment, and many forms of learning made available: meaning hands-on, visual materials, participation, or discussion. It became apparent that literacy isn't the only issue for a woman going back. Our group decided several things were needed for an optimum learning atmosphere.

- a safe place
- a support system
- motivation, specialized for individual needs
- a healing, therapeutic setting

Each time slot had four topics to choose from. This became difficult because each one seemed important.

The second topic was violence. I chose the group dealing with, "How do we deal with situations where women share their stories of violence and abuse with us?" In each group I encountered new faces, new opinions and new ideas. In this discussion many points were raised, mainly focusing on taking care of yourself and trying, although it's nearly impossible, not to take the disclosure or the problem home with you. We came up with several techniques to relax and rest so we could be better able to help the women that were doing the disclosing. We also all thought that violence is a major barrier for women learning. It affects our confidence and out ability to learn.

After lunch, the topic "Intercultural Experiences" came to the forefront. I didn't have much to say on this issue but was surprised at some of the comments made. I realize racism is a large problem but never considered the topic in detail before.

I felt very sad listening to some of the women's stories. One term which I thought was not offensive, women of colour, was actually something they mostly hated. I learned a lot about being labelled and judged just because of your skin colour.

After supper we all went to the Firehall Arts Center to see a production of "Canadian Tango", a play by Lina de Guevara, about the experiences of Latin American refugees in Canada. There we relaxed, and enjoyed each others' company while learning about some of the struggles young refugees faced.

Following that we all formed gangs and set out on the town in various directions. Five other ladies and I went in search of a Karaoke Club. This proved difficult, but persistence paid off and we found a small one in downtown Vancouver. It was nice, but I was determined to show the ladies a real Karaoke bar. At about 12 a.m. we walked into a huge club with a great sound system. Once inside I introduced myself to the host as a karaoke host from Saskatchewan and got up to sing. The rest of the night was great, especially the company. When the night was over we needed to find a way back to UBC. We chose a limo of course. Most of us had never been in one, and we had a great hour-long cruise around the downtown area, and back home. We played with every button and switch there was, all the while laughing and becoming friends.

Sunday, May 17, 1992

After breakfast we found another batch of choices. During all of the discussion groups there was a room called the speak out room. I had yet to visit it, so I decided to seek it out to get a total picture of what went on in all parts of the conference. Once there I listened to people speak on whatever they felt was a burning issue. I spoke as well when it came to the learners turn to put in our two cents.

After lunch we formed a huge circle, the meeting theme, and we held the FLWN founding meeting.

We assessed the conference and decided where we should go from here. We attempted to define the roles and tasks the FLWN would carry out. All participants were invited to contribute their thoughts and ideas. We then broke into smaller groups again to talk about specific objectives and then report back to the main body. We established some important areas the network would look into:

continued . . .

A report on the Founding Conference *continued*

- We should act as a support group for all literacy workers, with regular communication via computer or phone or mail.
- To effectively promote literacy and identify particular needs of women learners.
- To be a forum for feminist literacy issues.
- To promote a safe environment for adult women learners.

At the beginning we were told to plan our own closing ceremony. Several women had put together a celebration that was very moving. After a wonderful barbecue we stood in our symbolic circle and held hands to transfer energy from woman to woman. Then we did a soul song that was enchanting and unforgettable. The beautiful music we made I will always remember. We were then given a special rock which had been washed and blessed. Each person selected their own stone. I had a wonderful and inspiring weekend. It was a chance of a lifetime. I left the conference on Monday feeling rich and relaxed, with a great deal of new information and friends. My only concern was, "Am I really a feminist?" To me feminism means wanting better things for women. So I guess I am.

At this conference I learned that with time and effort we will get better treatment, and have better lives. Overall the conference was a very positive experience, and by the way, I got put on the steering committee for the next one. Thank you to the Saskatchewan Literacy Network for this chance.

***Brenda Storry** is a student in the Bridging Program for Women, SIAST, Wascana Campus, Regina. Brenda is planning a career in journalism.*

Announcing . . .

Struggles and Growth: Volumes I, II, III

Beautifully illustrated stories, poems, and essays by new Saskatchewan writers. Useful with a broad range of learners (Aboriginal, ABE, literacy, ESL, youth and corrections clients). Each volume is approximately 55 pages.

Cost: $6.00/volume + $1.00 postage (multiple copies at reduced rates)

Memories and Dreams: Volumes 1 and 2

Stories by recent immigrants to Canada focusing on their struggle to make a new life. Perfect learner reading for ESL students.

Cost: $5.00/volume + $1.00 postage (multiple copies at reduced rates)

Available from:

Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5
Phone: (306) 653-7178 Fax: (306) 933-6490

The printing of *Struggles and Growth* and *Memories and Dreams* is funded by the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation.

Gzowski talks of hope and promise at literacy awards dinner

By Sharon Skage

The Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit Dinner was held August 12, 1992 at the Centre of the Arts in Regina. This award dinner has been held in conjunction with the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for the past three years. These events serve to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of literacy in the province and to raise money for literacy programs and activities in Saskatchewan.

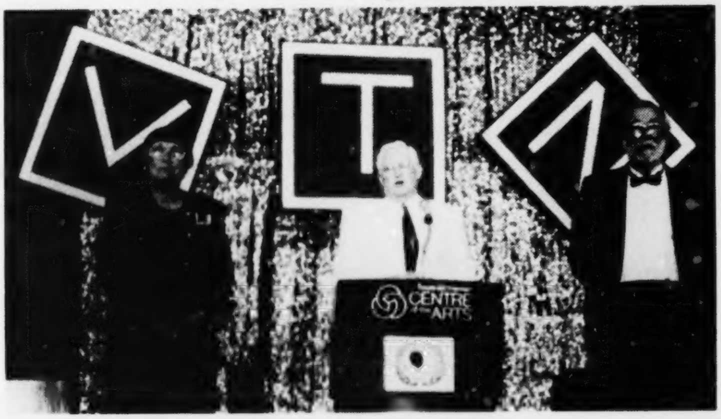
Proceeds of these two events, which in the first two years raised over $164,000, are distributed by The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation. The dinner and golf tournament are organized by the Committee to Promote Literacy in Saskatchewan.

The Award of Merit recognizes learners, professionals, volunteers, organizations, or corporations who have contributed to the promotion, advancement and development of literacy in the province. This year's recipients of the Saskatchewan Literary Award of Merit are:

Keppel Disney, Saskatoon
Clementine Longworth, Moose Jaw
Margaret Plunz, La Ronge
Debbie Purton, Yorkton
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
Joan Berntson, Regina

The awards were presented by the Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan and Peter Gzowski, host of CBC Radio's *Morningside*.

The programme also included a screening of the documentary "A Key to Freedom" and a reading from the work of Saskatchewan author Max Braithwaite by Carol Teichrob, Minister of Eduction.



At the Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit Dinner, left to right: The Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan; Cy MacDonald, master of ceremonies; and Peter Gzowski, host of CBC Radio's Morningside.

Commenting on the histories and accomplishments of the recipients, Gzowski said it is stories like theirs that keep him going. "There's hope and promise in these stories, hope and promise in an age of despair." The literacy movement, he said, is like a brush fire spreading across the country. But even brush fires can burn themselves out; Gzowski worries that literacy will become less "fashionable" in the eyes of funding agencies.

Yet, illiteracy itself is a very simple problem, according to Gzowski, unlike abortion or violence against women. "If someone doesn't know how to read, we know what to do: teach them. So, my friends, let's get on with it, shall we?"

***Sharon Skage** is the editor of* On Our Way, *Saskatchewan's plain English newspaper.* On Our Way *received the Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit in 1991.*

NETWORK NEWS

The Network is beginning the academic year with a new Administrative Assistant, Jayleen Groff. Jayleen replaces Cynthia Provo who occupied this position since the Network was founded in September 1989.

Cynthia worked for the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association for five years before being hired to organize the Network's Founding meeting. She has left her mark on the Network in many ways such as the title of our quarterly journal, *Literacy Works*. It was her idea that sparked discussions with Pine Grove Correctional Centre which resulted in publication of a provincial plain language newspaper *On Our Way*. Cynthia will be missed but not forgotten. We wish her well in her new home in British Columbia.

At the June 20 board meeting of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, President Peter Dubois thanks outgoing Administrative Assistant Cynthia Provo for her three years of hard work for the Network.

With summer holidays barely over, the office is busy preparing for the Annual General Meeting. This year's theme is "Together We're Stronger — Creating Our Own Synergy". The conference is being jointly planned by the Network and the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English speakers.

A provincial leadership conference for learners will be held October 15 to 17. The conference theme is "Learners Today; Leaders Tomorrow" and it is being planned by the Network's Learner Action committee.

The Prairie Literacy Institute took place in Saskatoon in July. Thirty-eight participants attended from the prairie provinces, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. The Institute was very successful and many participants have asked for a future Institute. Thanks are due to instructors Robin Millar, Mary Norton and Jean Reston and to Conference Assistant Nicole Staresina for making this an excellent event.

The final three volumes in the New Writers' Series have just arrived in the Network office. "Struggles and Growth, Volumes 1-3" are stories written by adult literacy students. The books were edited by Peggy Buckley and illustrated by Jan Herbert. Thanks go to the many adult learners who contributed their works, to the practitioners who collected the stories and to Peggy and Jan for an excellent publication. Thanks to the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy foundation for funding the printing of these books.

Gzowski talks of hope and promise at literacy awards dinner

By Sharon Skage

The Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit Dinner was held August 12, 1992 at the Centre of the Arts in Regina. This award dinner has been held in conjunction with the Peter Gzowski Invitational Golf Tournament for the past three years. These events serve to recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of literacy in the province and to raise money for literacy programs and activities in Saskatchewan.

Proceeds of these two events, which in the first two years raised over $164,000, are distributed by The Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation. The dinner and golf tournament are organized by the Committee to Promote Literacy in Saskatchewan.

The Award of Merit recognizes learners, professionals, volunteers, organizations, or corporations who have contributed to the promotion, advancement and development of literacy in the province. This year's recipients of the Saskatchewan Literary Award of Merit are:

Keppel Disney, Saskatoon
Clementine Longworth, Moose Jaw
Margaret Plunz, La Ronge
Debbie Purton, Yorkton
Saskatchewan Federation of Labour
Joan Berntson, Regina

The awards were presented by the Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan and Peter Gzowski, host of CBC Radio's *Morningside*.

The programme also included a screening of the documentary "A Key to Freedom" and a reading from the work of Saskatchewan author Max Braithwaite by Carol Teichrob, Minister of Eduction.

At the Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit Dinner, left to right: The Honourable Sylvia Fedoruk, Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan; Cy MacDonald, master of ceremonies; and Peter Gzowski, host of CBC Radio's Morningside.

Commenting on the histories and accomplishments of the recipients, Gzowski said it is stories like theirs that keep him going. "There's hope and promise in these stories, hope and promise in an age of despair." The literacy movement, he said, is like a brush fire spreading across the country. But even brush fires can burn themselves out; Gzowski worries that literacy will become less "fashionable" in the eyes of funding agencies.

Yet, illiteracy itself is a very simple problem, according to Gzowski, unlike abortion or violence against women. "If someone doesn't know how to read, we know what to do: teach them. So, my friends, let's get on with it, shall we?"

***Sharon Skage** is the editor of* On Our Way, *Saskatchewan's plain English newspaper.* On Our Way *received the Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit in 1991.*

NETWORK NEWS

The Network is beginning the academic year with a new Administrative Assistant, Jayleen Groff. Jayleen replaces Cynthia Provo who occupied this position since the Network was founded in September 1989.

Cynthia worked for the Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association for five years before being hired to organize the Network's Founding meeting. She has left her mark on the Network in many ways such as the title of our quarterly journal, *Literacy Works*. It was her idea that sparked discussions with Pine Grove Correctional Centre which resulted in publication of a provincial plain language newspaper *On Our Way*. Cynthia will be missed but not forgotten. We wish her well in her new home in British Columbia.

At the June 20 board meeting of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, President Peter Dubois thanks outgoing Administrative Assistant Cynthia Provo for her three years of hard work for the Network.

With summer holidays barely over, the office is busy preparing for the Annual General Meeting. This year's theme is "Together We're Stronger — Creating Our Own Synergy". The conference is being jointly planned by the Network and the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English speakers.

A provincial leadership conference for learners will be held October 15 to 17. The conference theme is "Learners Today; Leaders Tomorrow" and it is being planned by the Network's Learner Action committee.

The Prairie Literacy Institute took place in Saskatoon in July. Thirty-eight participants attended from the prairie provinces, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories. The Institute was very successful and many participants have asked for a future Institute. Thanks are due to instructors Robin Millar, Mary Norton and Jean Reston and to Conference Assistant Nicole Staresina for making this an excellent event.

The final three volumes in the New Writers' Series have just arrived in the Network office. "Struggles and Growth, Volumes 1-3" are stories written by adult literacy students. The books were edited by Peggy Buckley and illustrated by Jan Herbert. Thanks go to the many adult learners who contributed their works, to the practitioners who collected the stories and to Peggy and Jan for an excellent publication. Thanks to the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy foundation for funding the printing of these books.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

1. **Alberta Association for Adult Literacy Conference**

   "Maintaining Momentum," Annual Conference, November 19-21, Red Deer, Alberta.

   Registration fee: $135 before October 15.
   Telephone (403) 346-2533

2. **Plain Language conference**

   "Just Language", of special interest to individuals working in the legal system, Vancouver, October 22-24

   Registration fee: $400
   Telephone (604) 687-8895

3. **"Where Friends Meet" Stories from the Friendship Inn Literacy Centre**

   This beautiful collection is available from: READ Saskatoon, Box 7888, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7K 4R6. Cost: $6 + $1 for postage and handling.

INTRODUCING THE NETWORK STAFF

Nayda Veeman, executive director
Nayda has been with the Network since 1989. Prior to that, she was an instructor with the Women in Technology Program at the Saskatoon Community College. She also worked as coordinator for a job reentry program for immigrant women. Nayda is a training associate in the Adult Education Diploma program, St. Francis Xavier University. She is married and has a son and daughter who are both at university.

Sharon Skage, editor, *On Our Way* plain language newspaper
Sharon has been the editor of *On Our Way* since the paper began in April, 1990. Prior to that, she was the editor of Pine Times, an in-house newspaper produced at the Pine Grove Correctional Centre. Sharon works out of the Academic Centre, SIAST Woodland Campus, Prince Albert. She has two daughters who are both in elementary school.

Jayleen Groff, administrative assistant
Jayleen replaced Cynthia Provo this August. Jayleen graduated from the University of Regina in 1992 with a Bachelor of Administration. She has worked for the Government of Saskatchewan on the World Trade Database. Jayleen is also an aerobics instructor at SIAST Kelsey. She is married and lives in Regina.

Left to right: Jayleen Groff, administrative assistant; Sharon Skage, On Our Way *editor; and Nayda Veeman, executive director.*

Do you have ideas for Literacy Works?

Our winter issue will focus on **Literacy and Learning Disabilities**. Deadline for copy is **November 15, 1992.**

If you would like to contribute an article to this issue, if you have ideas for themes for other issues, or if you are interested in taking part in our editorial committee, please feel free to contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network office in Saskatoon, or call the editor, Liz Ormiston, at 757-7236 in Regina.

Advertise in Literacy Works . . .

and reach Literacy, English as a Second Language
and Adult Basic Education instructors,
learners and administrators across Saskatchewan.

Our advertising rates are:

Full page:	$250	($175 for non-profit groups)
Half page:	$140	($ 90 non-profits)
Quarter page:	$ 75	($ 50 non-profits)
Business card size:	$ 40	($ 35 non-profits)

Mail us your membership renewal today!

If you haven't yet renewed your membership with the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, please do so soon. Your 1991/92 membership expired on September 30. Choose from the following membership options for 1992/93.

General Membership: $20 – includes one copy of *Literacy Works* per quarterly issue.

Student Membership: $10 – includes one copy of *On Our Way* plain English newspaper monthly (9 issues per year).

Subscription Only: $20 – includes one copy of *Literacy Works Journal* per quarterly issue.

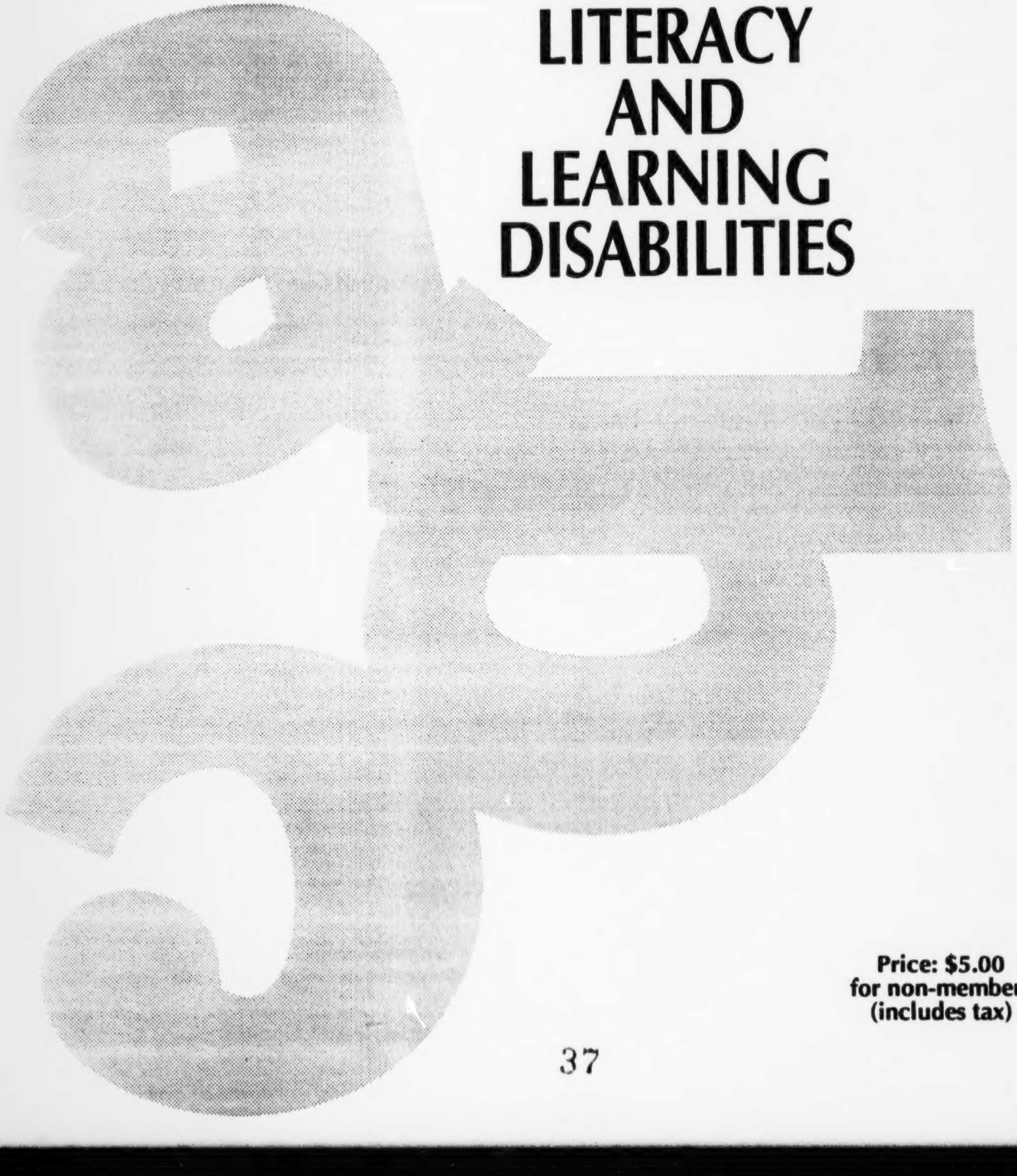
Please consider making a donation to help us cover the costs of producing *Literacy Works.* The actual cost of one annual subscription is $50. Receipts will be issued for income tax purposes.

Mail your completed cheque or money order to:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network
PO Box 1520
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7K 3R5

LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 4, No. 2 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network Winter 1993

LITERACY AND LEARNING DISABILITIES



Price: $5.00
for non-members
(includes tax)

Editorial committee this issue
Ved Arora, Debbie Purton, Elizabeth Slater,
Brenda Storry

Literacy Works Editor
Liz Ormiston

Contributors this issue
Sandy Gardiner, Laurie Garcia, Debbie Purton,
Io Powell, Teeya Scholten, Fred Reekie,
Pauline Greenough, Beverley McLeod, Linda Kasko,
Lynn McCaig, Brenda Storry, Roshan Hemani,
Elsie Livingston

Typing
Model Office, SIAST Wascana Campus, and
Lines & Letters

Desktop publishing
Lines & Letters

Printing
SIAST Wascana Campus

ISSN Number: 1183-3793

Saskatchewan Literacy Network Charitable Number:
0896225-21

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

Contents

EDITORIAL: Early intervention key to helping learning disabled
by Sandy Gardiner 2
PROFILE: The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan by Laurie Garcia . . 4
Regional College forges ahead in work for learning disabled by Debbie Purton 6
Specialized tutor training project underway by Io Powell and Debbie Purton 8
Calgary program brings learners and tutors together as partners
by Teeya Scholten 10
Self-efficacy: a critical factor in motivation by Fred Reekie 12
Approaching assessments with sensitivity by Pauline Greenough 14
Needs of aboriginal people with learning disabilities studied by Beverley MacLeod . . . 16
Diverse learning styles — a positive look at learning disabilities by Lynn McCaig. . . . 17
TUTORING TIPS: Word attack techniques: moving beyond traditional approaches by
Linda Kasko 18
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and learning disabilities: mothers' perspectives
by Brenda Storry 20
RESOURCE REVIEW: Asking the Right Questions reviewed by Roshan Hemani 21
Suggested reading list on learning disabilities and literacy by Laurie Garcia 22
A report on the Saskatchewan Forum on HIV/AIDS by Brenda Storry 23
Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) Link by Elsie Livingston 24
NETWORK NEWS 26
ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK 27

FL 800 753

Early intervention key to helping learning disabled

By Sandy Gardiner

Literacy is defined as *the information processing skills necessary to use the printed material commonly encountered at work, at home, and in the community.*[1] This is of great significance to individuals with learning disabilities, since a learning disability is primarily an inefficiency in information processing. A learning disability should not be mistaken for an inability to learn. On the contrary, children and adults with learning disabilities have average to superior intellectual ability. The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada defines learning disabilities as:

> *A generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation. Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.* (Learning Disabilities Association of Canada [LDAC], 1991)

This places individuals with learning disabilities in a high risk category for adult literacy problems. What is even more alarming is that children and adults with learning disabilities are estimated to comprise approximately 10 per cent of the general population (LDAC, 1991)

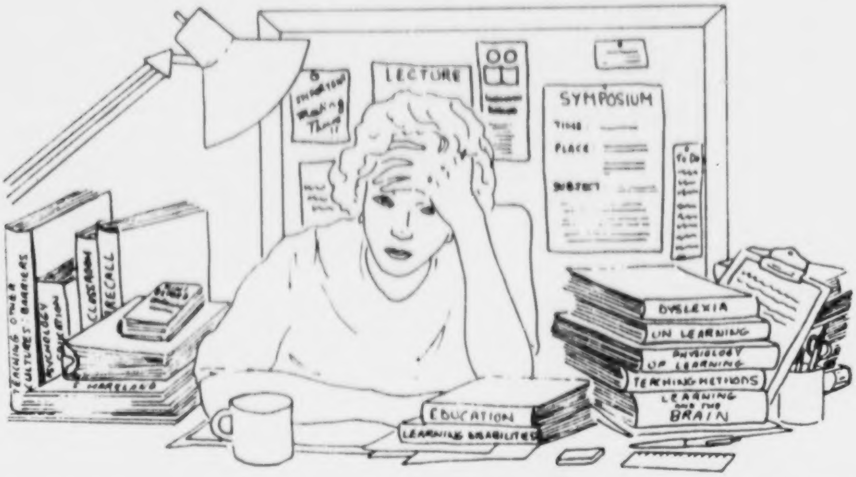
Persons with learning disabilities can and do learn, but their disabilities and learning styles are frequently exclusive to the individual. Because of this, they may not benefit fully from conventional classroom methods and may require literacy programs which address the specific needs of each individual. Thus, these students are particularly challenging and often costly to educate.

The key to literacy for the person with learning disabilities lies in early identification and early intervention. It is often difficult and even unwise to label children in early childhood as having a learning disability. However, astute kindergarten and first grade teachers are frequently able to identify children who are at risk for learning to read and write.

Often, we have believed that if we only waited until the child was "ready" a miracle would occur and suddenly everything would "click." In reality, these miracles are rare, and the theory of readiness applied in this context is wrought with danger. When these children remain without intervention in the emergent literacy environment of primary classrooms, they often grasp little beyond the fact that other children are learning to read and write and they are not. This results in feelings of intellectual inferiority and poor concepts of themselves as learners. In addition to collecting all of this negative emotional baggage and quite likely not benefitting from much of what may be excellent classroom instruction, these children are developing a myriad of ineffectual strategies which will have to be unlearned when they eventually do gain entry to a remedial program. If children are not benefitting from the regular

---

[1] National Literacy Secretariat, Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship.



program by January of first grade, in addition to regular classroom instruction, the acquisition of literacy should be expedited through daily, individual tutelage using a process approach to literacy instruction (Clay, 1985).

The goal of any special education program should be to have individuals with learning disabilities reading and writing within the average range for their grade placement. We should not be mislead into believing that the achievement of literacy will somehow eradicate the learning disability. On the contrary, these individuals struggle to overcome their particular learning differences throughout their lives. However, by giving students with learning disabilities the gift of literacy and by making other accommodations, such as the use of computers, scribes for taking notes, modified methods of evaluation, et cetera they are able to benefit from regular instruction. Moreover, they are able to finish high school and go on to post secondary training.

The alternative is that without appropriate instruction, individuals with learning disablities frequently do not learn to read and write adequately. Ultimately, many drop out of school to become chronically unemployed. The more fortunate in this group may eventually end up in adult literacy programs which will meet their needs.

It seems likely that early intervention is the best alternative in terms of cost effectiveness. By not attending to the literacy requirements of children with learning disabilities, intelligent human beings may be effectively rendered incapable of achieving their full potential, and, rather than contributing to society, they are apt to become a burden on it.

References

Clay, M. (1985). *The early detection of reading difficulties.* Auckland, New Zealand: Heinemann

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (1991). *Bringing literacy within reach: Identifying and teaching adults with learning disabilities.* Ottawa, Canada.

***Sandy Gardiner** is a resource teacher for Saskatoon (West) School Division. She is also on the Board of Directors of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, as well as president-elect of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan. The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan is a non-profit organization comprised of parents, professionals, and adults with learning disabilities. The aim of the association is to promote a better understanding of and services for individuals with learning disabilities.*

The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan

By Laurie Garcia

Association Background

Parents of learning disabled children began meeting as small informal support groups in Saskatoon and Regina in the late 1960s. In 1971, Doreen Kronick established the Canadian Association for Children with Learning Disabilities in Ottawa. The Saskatchewan Association for Children with Learning Disabilities, then located in Regina, registered itself as a provincial organization. The association is now called The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, and is located in Saskatoon. The name change in part reflects the realization that while an individual can learn to make accommodations for his or her disability and be successful, a learning disability is not outgrown.

The Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan (LDAS) is operated by a volunteer board of directors, comprised of parents, adults with learning disabilities and professionals. The association seeks to promote better services and opportunities for people of all ages with learning disabilities. To meet its objectives the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan continues to:

- offer free counselling
- publish a newsletter
- operate a resource library
- plan and coordinate workshops and conferences
- prepare briefs and position papers
- Vocational Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (VRDP) referrals

UNMASK THE LITERACY CRISIS

It is estimated that approximately 10 to 15 percent of the general population suffers from learning disabilities. While there are many people who have managed to succeed despite learning disabilities, the statistics associated with unremediated learning disabilities are grim. Forty-six percent of all juvenile delinquents, 50 percent of all teen suicides and high school drop outs are directly related to learning disabilities. Yet, people with learning disabilities can be successful, provided they have the following supports:

- caring family and/or friends, (someone who believes in them)
- a clear understanding (including a label) of their disability, and an ability to articulate their needs
- realistic goals based on their disability
- the ability to seek out help as they require it throughout their lifetime

In 1981 the Secretary of State recognized learning disabilities as one of the seven major handicapping conditions. The Saskatchewan Human Rights Act was amended in 1989 to include people with learning disabilities.

Projects 1992-1993

- LDAS worked with the Saskatoon Tribal Council to help develop a project which will assess the special needs of the children in this school jurisdiction.
- LDAS has conducted consumer workshops, specifically for those over 14, who have a learning disability and have concerns centred around self advocacy, employment, and post secondary education.
- A provincial conference was held on September 19, 1992.
- LDAS has hosted several workshops based on the works of Marie Clay titled *Early Intervention through Reading Recovery.*
- In the next year, with financial assistance from the Secretary of State, LDAS will work jointly with Parkland Regional College to host workshops around Saskatchewan for literacy workers on the needs of adult learners with learning disabilities. Under the same project, Parkland Regional College will develop a reference handbook for literacy workers on learning strategies appropriate for adults with learning disabilities.
- In 1995, the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan will host the 10th National Conference.

This conference will attract international speakers and participants, and should help LDAS continue to keep all those in Saskatchewan concerned with learning disabilities abreast of the latest research, trends, and issues.

***Laurie Garcia** is executive director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan.*

Back issues of Literacy Works available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 1, No. 2	Computers and Literacy
Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 2	Plain Language
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family Literacy

Regional College forges ahead in work for learning disabled

By Debbie Purton

Nationally, it is estimated that approximately 10 percent of the population has learning disabilities. Some of these individuals were able to access special services within the school system which enabled them to develop basic skills. Others, however, have gone on to adulthood with very minimal reading and writing skills. It is this latter group which is returning, after many years of struggle, to adult education programs for literacy training.

A review of recent literature supports estimates which suggest that between 40 and 70 percent of students enrolled in adult literacy programs have learning disabilities. Regardless of the exact figure, a significant number of adult learners enrolled in literacy and other upgrading programs have some degree of learning disability.

In 1989, Parkland Regional College in Yorkton received funding through the National Literacy Secretariat to undertake a two-year developmental project aimed at developing an intervention model appropriate to the needs of adults with learning disabilities. The main objectives of this project were to:

- develop or identify screening and assessment procedures appropriate for adults with learning disabilities;
- identify the training requirements of volunteers who were tutoring adults with learning disabilities;
- determine the support services required;
- compile a list of recommended resources; and
- develop specialized instructional resources suitable for use with learning disabled adults.

To achieve these objectives, an initial screening checklist was developed for use by tutors and other paraprofessionals in identifying adults who displayed characteristics common to adults with learning disabilities. A diagnostic process was implemented which included the use of *Structure of Intellect Learning Abilities test* (a psycho-educational assessment tool), in addition to a variety of other formal and informal assessment procedures. The training requirements of volunteer tutors were identified and specialized training workshops were conducted. The tutoring match between volunteer tutor and student was then initiated and supported with the assistance of project staff. The support services of project participants were determined and a support group was formed to address a variety of social-emotional needs. These needs were further addressed through individual counselling and advocacy assistance by project staff.

A wide range of resources was purchased for use by tutors and learners. A list of recommended resources suitable to the needs, interest and ability levels of adults with learning disabilities was compiled based on feedback provided by tutor-learner pairs. Additionally, a specialized instructional resource manual for volunteer tutors was developed. This publication, entitled "Instructional Strategies for Adults with Learning Disabilities," presents a series of teaching strategies suitable for use with learning disabled adults.

As an extension of this project, training in the use of the Structure of Intellect Learning Abilities test was organized at the provincial level. Subsequent to this training, several other adult education institutions within the province have initiated use of this assessment device to better identify and assist adults with learning disabilities.

Parkland Regional College is pleased with the extent to which its developmental work in the area of adults with learning disabilities has been accepted both at the provincial and national level. Project reports and the accompanying Instructional Strategies handbook have been requested by 21 organizations within Saskatchewan, 25 literacy and learning disability group across Canada and three organizations from outside Canada.

There is a great need for shared information and continued research related to the field of learning disabilities and the adult learner. It is our hope that this information will assist others in understanding and responding to the needs of this special population.

***Debbie Purton** is Literacy Coordinator with the Parkland Regional College in Yorkton, and has been involved in adult literacy for 11 years.*

For more information on the work that Parkland Regional College is conducting contact Debbie Purton, Parkland Regional College, 72 Melrose Avenue, Yorkton, Sask. S3N 1Z3, telephone 783-6566.

SPECIAL PRICE

A set of five volumes of writings by new Saskatchewan writers and recent immigrants to Canada is available for $25 (includes postage). Included are:

Struggles and Growth, Volumes I, II and III
These are beautifully illustrated stories, poems and essays by new Saskatchewan writers. (regular price $6/volume plus $1 postage)

Memories and Dreams, Volumes I and II
These are stories by recent immigrants to Canada focusing on their struggle to make a new life. (regular price $5/volume plus $1 postage)

Available from:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, telephone (306) 653-7178, fax (306) 933-6490.

The printing of *Struggles and Growth* and *Memories and Dreams* is funded by the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation.

Specialized tutor training project underway

By Io Powell and Debbie Purton

A grant from the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada has enabled Parkland Regional College to respond to a need for specialized volunteer tutor training as identified through a Saskatchewan Literacy Network survey.

The first phase of the project involved hosting a provincial workshop entitled "Assessment of Adults with Learning Difficulties" presented by Dr. Marilyn Samuels and Dr. Teeya Scholten of The Learning Centre in Calgary. The second phase has been the development of a resource package to support literacy personnel involved in training volunteers to tutor adults with learning disabilities. The third phase, scheduled for early 1993, will include pilot workshops for tutors, revisions and a presentation of the package to literacy coordinators in Saskatchewan.

The resource package, "Changing Focus: Building Confidence and Competence in Adults with Reading Disabilities," is based on the belief that a change in emphasis in tutoring programs may assist adults with learning disabilities to become more effective readers. The package includes a series of plans for workshop activities which encourage volunteer tutors to gain a better understanding of adults with learning disabilities and to shift the emphasis of their teaching from a product to a process orientation.

The first module of the workshop focuses on enhancing tutor awareness of the impact of learning disabilities on adults' self-esteem and motivation. The second module involves an examination of reading comprehension and the implications of differentiating between *comprehension product* (the answer) and *comprehension process* (thinking about how one arrives at the answer). In module 3, the activities highlight the importance of providing opportunities for students to better understand and regulate their own learning. The activities of module 4 explore the principles of effective reading strategies.

The activity plans are supplemented by blackline masters for duplication of handouts. Transparencies and two videotapes provide visual clarification of concepts developed during the activities. The first video, "Breaking the Unseen Barrier: We're Not Stupid," developed by ACCESS network, provides insight into the emotional impact of learning disabilities. Through interviews, children and adults with learning disabilities discuss their fears, frustrations, hopes and successes. The second video, presently in production, illustrates a model for teaching reading comprehension strategies to adults with learning disabilities.

It is anticipated that workshop leaders using the package for the first time will follow the plans closely and that during subsequent presentations they will modify the plans to personalize them. Parkland Regional College looks forward to suggestions which will be offered by tutors and practitioners during the piloting and revision stages of the project. It is earnestly hoped that tutors participating in the workshops will leave with an enhanced appreciation of the challenges and rewards offered by changing the focus of their interactions with their students.

For more information on this project contact Io or Debbie at Parkland Regional College, 72 Melrose Avenue, Yorkton, Sask. S3N 1Z2, telephone 783-6566.

***Io Powell** has been involved in education for 41 years. Her experience includes that of elementary teacher, junior high librarian, adult educator, consultant with the Department of Education and literacy coordinator. In addition to her position with Parkland Regional College, Io is presently tutoring a learning disabled adult.*

***Debbie Purton**, Literacy Coordinator with Parkland Regional College, has been involved in the field of adult literacy for 11 years. She has participated in four national projects targeting adults with learning disabilities, and was one of the contributing authors for "Bringing Literacy Within Reach: Identifying and teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities" developed by The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada. Debbie currently serves on the board of directors of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan and is a recent recipient of the 1992 Saskatchewan Literacy Award of Merit.*

I THINK THEREFORE...
...I THINK I'M THINKING
Mal

Calgary program brings learners and tutors together as partners

By Teeya Scholten

The Partners for Learning (PFL) program is a bridging program which assists adult learners who have learning disabilities and difficulties in reading and writing. The program aims to help them develop the self-confidence necessary to succeed in traditional academic or employment situations.

A supervised one-to-one volunteer tutoring model is used. This model was developed by a teacher, Denise Theunissen, while she was on staff at the Learning Centre in Calgary a few years ago. Since then, this approach has been applied with equal success with various client types including junior high and post-secondary students with learning difficulties. Its uniqueness is characterized by several factors, including ongoing training and supervision of volunteers and the use of mediated learning principles in the teaching of *meta-cognitive* strategies.

All students are initially assessed, given an individual program plan (IPP) and matched with a volunteer. The PFL program is different from other literacy programs in that the partners are carefully supervised. The tutors and learners meet in a group once a week, for two and a half hours, rather than working independently at times of their own convenience.

During the first half hour of the weekly session, an in-service training session is held for the volunteers. (They have already received about six hours of training before the program begins.) Learners are welcome and, in fact, usually do attend! After this, the partners work together to apply the learning strategies taught. They use material relevant to the learner and appropriate to the goals the learner has set for him or herself. The approach is a relaxed, upbeat one, designed to facilitate the experience of success in the learners. Meta-cognitive strategies are used to enhance the learner's awareness of how he or she learns best.

A ratio of one teacher to 10 learner-volunteer pairs allows the program leader to spend about 10 minutes each session directly observing and supervising the partners working together. During this time, the tutor can be given feedback,

adjustments made to the IPP and individual concerns discussed. Tutors and learners may also be contacted individually during the week on the telephone for additional follow-up. This is especially important in the early weeks of the match. This on-site supervisory aspect is felt to have accounted for the very positive results of the program.

Evaluation results suggest that our Partners for Learning clients experience improved self-confidence along with an increase in skill levels in reading, writing and spelling. Approximately one-third have been able to go on to further formal education immediately following their Partners for Learning experience.

This program is made possible through the support of the City of Calgary Family and Community Support Services, fund-raising contributions from the Peter Gzowski tournament and nominal client fees.

Anyone interested in observing the program is welcome to attend. Please contact Maureen Howard, PFL Co-ordinator, The Learning Centre, 3930 20th St. S.W., Calgary, Alberta T3G 1P7, telephone (403) 686-9300, if you have any questions about how you might be able to implement this type of program.

***Teeya Scholten** is a Chartered Psychologist who has had extensive experience working with both children and adults experiencing learning disabilities and difficulties, and consulting with professionals who work in the field. She has recently co-authored a book "Assessment and Program Planning for Adults with Learning Difficulties" (Samuels, Burrows and Scholten, 1992). See review, page 21.*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Self-efficacy: a critical factor in motivation

By Fred Reekie

People continually "take readings" on themselves. They rate the quality of the work they produce, and they observe the reactions of other people. Self-monitoring is important because it provides useful information for correcting and preventing errors. When individuals with learning disabilities evaluate their performance, they see how problems with reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics complicate their life.

Thinking about these difficulties may lead to the question, "Why should I even bother? It doesn't matter how hard I try, it isn't going to make any difference anyway." This is called learned helplessness. The opposite of learned helplessness is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that, "If I use the right strategies carefully, I will be successful."

People with learned helplessness quit working at the first sign of failure. This is not because of laziness; it is because they have lost hope. On the other hand, people who develop self-efficacy become more determined, look for new strategies, and actually work harder when they face difficulties.

Four factors strengthen the development of self-efficacy: successful performances; good models; social support; and positive emotional and physiological reactions. The following guidelines for instruction provide for each of these four critical factors.

- Tasks should be assigned only if students have a good chance of completing them satisfactorily. Unrealistic tasks should either be left until the required skills are mastered or altered to make them reasonable. In addition to the course content, instructors should teach, model and coach students in learning strategies. Students need strategies for such things as reading to find key information, pulling details from diagrams and models, making notes from a lecture or video, preparing study notes, memorizing critical information, writing essays and reports, completing assignments and attacking test questions.
- Students should observe a variety of successful models. Cooperative learning groups provide struggling students with opportunities to see how others perform difficult tasks. Local individuals and famous people who have succeeded despite learning difficulties can be powerful models for students. Thomas Alva Edison, Woodrow Wilson, and Leonardo da Vinci are such models.
- Parents, teachers and peers can offer encouragement to students in the

form of high expectations, task assistance and recognition. They can also provide feedback which emphasizes successes and helps students understand how to use strategies to improve their performance.

- Anxiety reactions can be reduced if students are taught the techniques of systematic relaxation. It is also important to replace negative self-talk with statements that emphasize positive action. Students should be taught to make statements such as "If I slow down and go step-by-step, I will make fewer errors in Algebra." and "If I make point form notes while I read this, I will understand it."

Learning disabilities present major challenges for students and teachers. Students need to be convinced that they can improve their performance by using the appropriate strategies.

References

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review, 84*, 191-215.

Lopez, F.G., & Lent, R.W. (1992). Sources of mathematics self-efficacy in high school students. *The Career Development Quarterly, 41*, 3-12.

Seligman, M.E.P. (1975). Helplessness: *On depression, development and death.* San Francisco: Freeman.

__Fred Reekie__ is an Associate Professor in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan. He has worked extensively in the area of learning strategies instruction.

An Invitation

Have you come across a new
or interesting literacy resource lately?
one that you think other ESL or ABE
practitioners would find helpful
in their classroom/tutoring work?
or one that learners might like
to read on their own?
or one that literacy programmers
might find helpful their work?

Literacy Works is interested in setting up a regular section with short write-ups on literacy resources, as well as longer resource reviews. If you don't have time to do the write-up or review yourself, just drop us a line or call us with the basic information about the resource, and we'll find someone to do the writing.

Call the Network office
in Saskatoon, 653-7178,
or Liz Ormiston, *Literacy Works* editor,
in Regina, 757-7236
with your suggestions.

Approaching assessments with sensitivity

By Pauline Greenough

When, 30 years ago, the term "learning disabilities" first came into being, it was used specifically for children. At that time, it was believed that if learning disabled children were given appropriate special help they could be "cured." These individuals are now adults and we realize that a learning disability is a lifelong phenomenon which shows itself in different ways as we get older but remains with us throughout our lives.

According to the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD), 1984 definition "Specific Learning Disabilities — is a chronic condition of presumed neurological origin which selectively interferes with the development, integration and/or demonstration of verbal and/or non-verbal abilities." The definition goes on to say that it is a "distinct handicapping condition" and that it can affect an individual throughout life. Mention is particularly made of its affect on "self-esteem, education, vocation, socialization and/or daily activities."

Adults with learning disabilities may have been identified when they were young. If so, they probably had the disability explained to them. They may have been given remediation to overcome some of their reading/spelling problems and taught alternative approaches to become more efficient learners. If so, they may have learned to be their own best advocate, seeking special accommodation from their teachers.

However, many learning disabled adults have never been identified as such. Instead they were labelled "lazy" or "slow" when they were in school. As a result of their repeated failures, they may even have developed delinquent behaviour in an attempt to be recognized — negative attention being better than nothing at all. (Research has shown that a large percentage of the inmates in Correctional Institutions have learning disabilities which were never identified.)

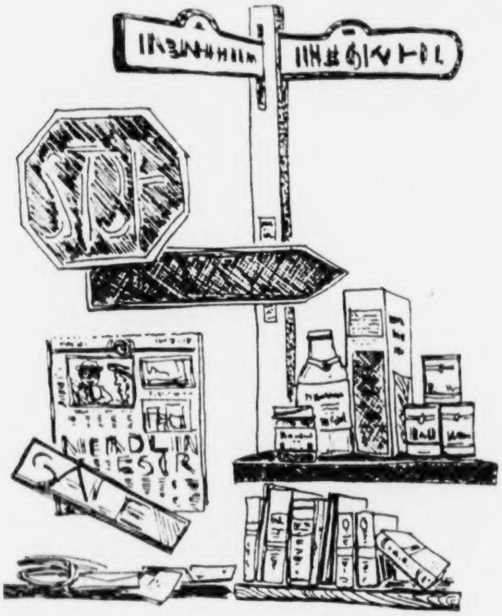
Most adults who are learning disabled go to great lengths to prevent their friends and employers discovering their difficulties. As no one has explained the cause of their problems, they consider themselves "stupid and dumb." Having such poor self-esteem, they are at risk for depression and many turn to alcohol or drugs. Some have health problems directly related to the stress they endure trying to hide their inadequacies.

When adults with this type of history are referred to a clinician for diagnosis of their learning difficulties, they will suffer extreme anxiety and even resist participating in the testing. It is very important that relationships of trust are built by approaching the assessments with a problem-solving, partnership-building attitude. Time should be taken to explain the purpose of each test. Clients should be involved in the discovery of the strategies they use to perform the tasks and in the analysis of why certain tasks are easy or difficult.

Every effort should be made to discover and emphasize the clients' strengths. For this reason, using a non-verbal test of intellectual ability is preferable at the outset rather than the *Wechsler or Stanford-Binet* (intelligence tests). The format of puzzles, in a visual analogies test, is far less threatening than the question and answer process which is so reminiscent of past school failure. Showing the clients that, even though they have reading and spelling problems, they have at least average, and possibly above average, intelligence provides a tremendous boost to their morale and the diagnostic process can then become therapeutic.

Each client has a pattern of strengths and weaknesses which require a variety of tests to discover. Though each clinician may have his or her own approach to diagnosis and favourite test instruments, it is unwise to use one isolated test and base all one's recommendations on the findings from it. Diagnostic reports should be written with the recipient in mind. Adults should have a copy of their own report and should have it read to them with explanations given for any terminology they do not understand. It is particularly important, therefore, that the report should emphasize the positive and have suggestions and recommendations that are practical.

***Pauline Greenough** is a professor in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, specializing in learning disabilities. In 1986, she headed an adult clinic created to help adults with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, owing to financial cutbacks at the University, this service was discontinued. Pauline still sees clients in her very limited spare time.*



Needs of aboriginal people with learning disabilities studied

By Beverley MacLeod

The Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba (LDAM) is carrying out a project to identify the needs of aboriginal people with learning disabilities. To determine the degree of need in Manitoba, we are doing a needs assessment in the Dauphin catchment area (a rural area surrounding Dauphin). This will provide us with a sample which will give us an idea of the needs of aboriginal people with learning disabilities in the province as a whole. The project has two components:

Aboriginal Literacy Screening

LDAM, in collaboration with relevant service providers and professionals in the Dauphin catchment area, is seeking to:

1. Identify the level of need which might be associated with a learning disability in this community of adults with literacy difficulties;
2. Identify the existing variables which limit the development of literacy among aboriginal adults;
3. Identify appropriate linkages in the educational and service delivery system which would promote accurate and sensitive diagnosis and implementation of remedial supports required to address the unmet needs of this population.

Aboriginal Linguistic Adaptation

LDAM will adapt and translate into Cree, Ojibway and culturally relevant English instruments designed to help literacy practitioners identify and teach literacy skills to adults with learning disabilities. A manual produced by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada entitled "Bringing Literacy Within Reach — Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities" will be the primary instrument used. Minor adaptations and additions may be made as deemed appropriate by the linguists responsible for the translations. These manuals will then be distributed to many literacy practitioners working with aboriginal people across the province to be incorporated into their training curriculum.

This past summer, our organizations held a one-day workshop for some of the literacy practitioners from across the province to provide training into the identification of persons with learning difficulties and to provide remediation strategies to promote more effective learning. The "Bringing Literacy Within Reach" manual, in combination with a video on interviewing techniques for persons with learning difficulties, were provided to participants.

__Beverley MacLeod__ is executive director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Manitoba.

For more information contact LDAM,
301 – 960 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg,
Manitoba R3G 0R4, telephone: (204) 774-1821.

Diverse learning styles — a positive look at learning disabilities

By Lynn McCaig

Much has been written about learning disabilities and how they contribute to illiteracy. Such a premise can only lead to our assumption that those with learning disabilities will have a much harder time learning to read, write and perform mathematical skills. However, if teachers and instructors were to look at the various learning styles of their students, perhaps some of the difficulties would be alleviated and the students could achieve greater success in learning.

In the adult education sector, many of the programs are individualized and are structured so that learners can work on their own. Written materials are presented at various levels, with questions to check comprehension, vocabulary and thinking skills. With limited access to an instructor to explain and interpret materials, a student with a visual perception problem will have great difficulty interpreting the materials. Such a student may learn more effectively by having the materials explained orally and then discussing them with other students.

Many of the students returning to school to upgrade their academic skills have been out of school for a number of years and dropped out for a variety of reasons. A lot of them became "bored" with school. These are usually students who failed to learn the reading skills necessary to cope with increasingly difficult reading materials. As the difficulty level increased, the coping skills of the students broke down and they became frustrated. That frustration led to declining interest and, finally, boredom. And so, saying they are "bored" and "this isn't relevant to my life," the students dropped out. The reading difficulty that led the students to drop out has been overlooked in the students' decision to quit school.

If the school system were to study those who have dropped out, one of the findings would likely be that the students did not have the reading skills necessary to cope with the subjects.

The term "learning disability" has a negative connotation which, when used by instructors and students, tends to put the person in a position of handicap even before the process of learning has begun. There are many types of learning disabilities and the way to approach overcoming them is to find the learning style that best accomodates the individual student.

Our school systems have used basically one approach to teaching reading — an analytic/auditory approach. This method of learning — the phonetic method — breaks words into parts and then puts them back together again. This approach works for children and adults who like doing puzzles, playing with nonsense words and taking things apart to see how they work. Many children and adults do not learn from this method but have a more global approach to learning. For them, meaning is the key. Words need to be presented within their context and then used, played with and explored in various ways for the memory of the word to be retained. Games and computers are

continued . . .

Diverse learning styles *continued*

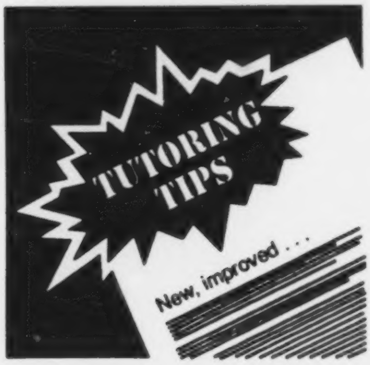
effective ways to help students who learn in this way.

Other ways of helping these students learn include providing tapes of stories so that the stories can be heard in their entirety before being taken apart. This connects the visual and auditory styles. The learners hear and see the story. Then, the learners can use this information to tell their own story, record it, write it and learn from it. The students have involvement in the process of learning.

Both children and adults in learning situations need to feel that they are in control of their learning processes. When learners lose this power, particularly high school students, they become disenchanted with the system and essentially stop learning. When they stop learning, they fall behind their classmates and begin to lose their self-esteem and motivation to learn. This can happen as soon as Grade One — a sad thing since it is at this point in a child's life that he or she is most eager to learn.

Can we, as teachers and instructors, turn this around? By recognizing that learning disabilities are associated with differences in learning styles, and then by discovering the learning style that best fits each learner, perhaps fewer children and adults would be diagnosed as learning disabled and be freed to discover the pathway that leads them to greater reading and learning power.

***Lynn McCaig** is an instructor with the Bridging Program for Women at the Wascana Campus of the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology, Regina.*



Word attack techniques: moving beyond traditional approaches

By Linda Kasko

Teaching word attack skills can become frustrating if the pupil does not respond to traditional methods. When a pupil exhibits continued difficulty with sounding out words (phonics) or recognizing words by sight, it does not automatically mean the student is learning disabled. He or she may need an alternate method of instruction. The intent of this article is to review different decoding approaches. These alternate decoding approaches are aimed at students who are having difficulty getting beyond basic decoding skills such as alphabet recognition and basic sight words.

Pre-reading is one method that aids both word attack and comprehension. This method requires the student to read the title and look at any illustrations (if the student is unable to read the title, the teacher may read it to him or her). The student then orally predicts what the selection will be about. Questions to aid in the prediction include:

Where does this story take place?
Who are the people in this story?
When does this story take place?
(season, present, past, future)
Further questions regarding what was life like then, tell me about this place, etc.

After eliciting these predictions, the teacher may also discuss what is the author's purpose — to entertain? to inform? to state an opinion?

The third pre-reading segment is to teach any vocabulary that would be difficult to decode or that needs an explanation of its meaning.

These pre-reading exercises aid the student with decoding words by using the context. The more a person knows about what the topic entails, the easier it is to correctly predict the difficult words. The difficult words will fit the meaning of the selection. Pre-reading should be used along with other reading strategies.

Repeated reading is another method that aids in word attack and fluency. This method requires a reading selection of 50-200 words to be read over and over again until a satisfactory level of accuracy is attained.

First, the student follows as the teacher reads a selection aloud or listens to a tape recording of the story. Next, the student reads the story with the teacher/tape recorder. Finally, the student reads the story on his or her own. The teacher records the reading time and the errors. If unsatisfactory, the student reads the story over until he or she meets an appropriate level of accuracy and speed. The speed factor is important as word recognition errors decrease as speed increases.

In the Neurological Impress Method (NIM), the teacher and the student read together as the teacher points to each word read. Initially, the instructor reads slightly louder and faster than the student and directs his or her voice into the student's ear. After the student has achieved some accuracy, the student points to each word and the instructor reads slightly after the student. Materials used should be easy reading; no corrections are offered nor are comprehension questions asked. NIM should be done for no longer than 15 minutes a day for a total of 12 hours. If improvement is not noted after four hours of instruction, discontinue.

Use a vertical format for presenting written material. At first, arrange reading material to single words on a line, then increase to two words or phrases per line, et cetera. Changing the format makes the reading material less visually challenging.

Example of second level:

Albert
found
a pencil
in the car.

Increase the size of print on the photocopier. Again, this is less visually challenging for the student.

These are only a few of many word attack strategies. The pre-reading strategy should be used with other approaches for decoding. Changing one component, like increasing the print size, can make a significant difference to the student.

Linda Kasko is presently a resource room teacher with the Prince Albert School Division #3. She has dealt with reading delayed and learning disabled students for 12 years and is actively involved with local and provincial Councils for Exceptional Children.

Do you have a useful classroom or tutoring exercise or technique you'd like to write about for *Literacy Works!* Call the Network Office in Saskatoon, 653-7178 or Liz Ormiston, editor, in Regina, 757-7236.

EST COPY AVAILABLE

Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and learning disabilities: mothers' perspectives

By Brenda Storry

Is there a connection between Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and learning disabilities? I asked this question of three moms with FAS children.

Pat, has two children; the oldest has FAS.

"I've noticed a definite connection, and the differences between my two children are very apparent. Kayla is six and she still has trouble with many things. Darla is three and in many ways is more capable than Kayla. Although Kayla has had some tests, the total extent of her disabilities is not yet known."

Donna is a 19-year-old mother with a five-year-old daughter, Kimberly.

"Kim is a bright kid. I think with just a little extra help she can overcome any problems in the learning process that she comes across. I don't think she is that bad off. Of course, I feel very guilty, so I maybe overcompensate for her disabilities. I think we can use positive thoughts and actions. Not that I think I'm brilliant, but I think some disabilities can be turned around with the right directions and attitudes. I think I have those traits."

Petrice is a foster mom. Over the years she has had seven FAS children in her care. Presently she has one.

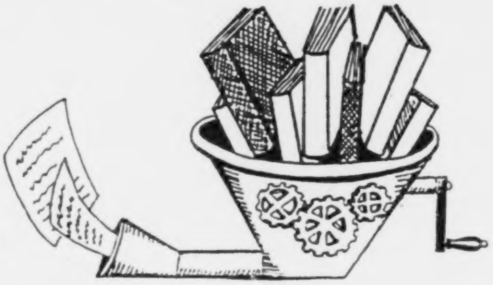
"I think you'll find the connection staggering. FAS children are so special and can end up with a wide range of physical or mental problems. Some people mistake their learning problems, because they can have so many other problems, so some of their disabilities get overlooked, especially at an early age. I specialize in my home. I only take sick or problem kids. I feel like they already have enough trouble. Since I'm a nurse, I think my extra knowledge helps to make them more comfortable. Each time I get a special child, I research whatever they have. FAS is special because it can and does have many different facets.

"Johnathon is a great kid. I believe when all the testing is done (it will be shown that) he will have major learning disabilities. There are different degrees. Not all FAS children are the same, depending on amounts of alcohol they were exposed to at the developing prenatal stages. FAS makes most children handicapped intellectually, and often affects their social behaviour. Although some children's features are a tell-tale sign of FAS, others appear normal to a degree. FAS kids can be hyper or placid, there is varying degrees. Some can be integrated into semi-regular schools but for the most part need special help."

I found it very interesting to chat with these women. This is a condensed version of their comments. I also found a great show that people could watch for more information on FAS. It's an overview of FAS called Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, produced by Martin Kondzielewski from Cable Regina (Channel 7). This is community television and can be re-broadcast upon request by phoning 569-3510 and asking for the Production Department. Messages can also be left on the viewer response line, 757-7676.

***Brenda Storry** recently graduated from the Bridging Program for Women in Regina and is planning a career in journalism.*

Resource review



Asking the Right Questions
Assessment and Program Planning for Adults with Learning Difficultires

By Marilyn Samuels, Iris Burrows and Teeya Scholton

Published by The Learning Centre, Calgary and Alberta Vocational College, Calgary, 1992.

Reviewed by Roshan Hemani

The purpose of this manual is not to tell you how to teach an adult learner but to help you clarify problem areas when a learner's progress is below expectation. The manual focuses on assisting tutors and teachers to improve their assessment skills so they may be able to:

- better understand "the blocks to learning"
- ascertain learner's strengths
- assist the learner in understanding his own functioning
- develop effective programs
- evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

The manual begins with a discussion of some of the issues in adult learning, mainly, differing learning needs of adults and children, examination of one's own beliefs about learning, current views on learning and factors that impede learning (chapter 1). In the rest of the 11 chapters the reader is guided through the problem-solving process, from identification of the problem to information-gathering to the development, implementation and evaluation of a program plan.

This is a reader-friendly manual. It has been written in an interactive format that allows the reader to understand and apply the assessment process. Case studies, vignettes and model exercises are used extensively, providing opportunities for readers to respond and compare their ideas with the authors'. Excellent graphic illustrations and precise chapter summaries further assist the reader in understanding the topics discussed in the manual.

I highly recommend this manual for all literacy centres.

***Roshan Hemani** works as Literacy Coordinator Assistant with Parkland Regional College in Yorkton. She has been in the adult education field for the past four years. Prior to that, she taught in high schools in Toronto, Ontario and Nairobi, Kenya for 15 years.*

Suggested reading list on learning disabilities and literacy

By Laurie Garcia

Clay, Marie. *The Early Detection of Reading Difficulties.* Heinemann Education, 1979.

Cordoni, Barbara. *Living with a Learning Disability.* Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697.

Cranton, Patricia. *Planning Instruction for Adult Learners.* Toronto: Wall & Thompson, 1990.

Crus, Sandra C. *Learning Strategies for Adults. Compensations for Learning Disabilities.* Toronto: Wall & Emerson, 1991.

Goldstein, Ricki. *Taking the Mystique out of Learning Disabilities: Practical guide for Literacy tutors.* Saint John, NB: Laubach Literacy of Canada, 1989.

Gorman-Gard, Kathleen A. *Figurative Language: A Comprehensive Program.* Thinking Publications, 1731 Wesstgate Road, P.O. Box 163, Eay Claire, WI 54702-0163, $31 (US).

Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC). *Bringing Literacy Within Reach. Identifying and Teaching Adults with Learning Disabilities.* 1991. Available from Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, 610 Clarence Avenue South, Saskatoon, S7H 2E2. $30.

Scheiber, Barbara and Jeanne Talpers. *Unlocking Potential: College and Other Choices for Learning Disabled People. A Step-By-Step Guide.* Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1987.

Smith, Cathy, M.A. *For You: Adults with Learning Disabilities.* Ottawa: Learning Disabilities Association of Canada, Available from Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan, $7.

Stevens, H. Suzanne. *The Learning Disabled Child: Ways That Parents Can Help.* Winston-Salem, NC: John F. Blair, Publisher.

Pinnel, Su. *Bridges to Literacy.* Heineman Education, 1991.

Van den Honeret, Dorothy. *Reading from Scratch/RFS.* Educators Publishing Service Inc./Canada, 1100 Birchmount Road, Scarborough, ON M1K 5H9.

Whyte, Lillian, Ph.D., Kovach, Karen, M. ED., Vosahlo, Marion, B.A. *Identifying and Diagnosing Post Secondary Students with Learning Disabilities.* Office of Services for Students with Disabilities, 300 Athabasca Hall, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB, T6G 2E8. $43.

***Laurie Garcia** is executive director of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan.*

Contact your local public library for more information on these resources.

A report on the Saskatchewan Forum on HIV/AIDS

By Brenda Storry

On June 18, 1992 I represented the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at the Saskatchewan Forum on HIV/AIDS, hosted by Saskatchewan Health. At first I was unsure if I would be able to add anything useful to the gathering of people, but soon found out my opinions and comments were just as valued as those of the other 110 people from every walk of life from doctors, researchers, caregivers, concerned citizens and community groups. From the initial morning talks seven major issues and priorities emerged.

- Education, public and targeted
- Public awareness
- Prevention
- Care and support services
- Research and information
- Human rights
- HIV/AIDS in the workplace

We began by envisioning an ideal world in which there is universal understanding, care and support for sufferers, and a cure — or at least success in making this disease chronic, rather than fatal. Then, moving to reality we discussed barriers to make our world exist. We then recommended strategies to help overcome what barriers we could, and aim at a remedy for barriers not fixed easily. We didn't all agree on every topic, however, but I believe we each learned a great deal from the other opinions and plans. Our main problem is education. We decided everyone — individuals, community groups, native groups, churches, professional organizations, and government — must get involved in this large project.

Many individual topics were brought up as well. I voiced my opinion on special education for illiterate people and other special case groups. Anyway, I left the day knowing my opinions and concerns were heard as were all others present.

During this intense and busy day we pinpointed many issues and identified priorities for our government's use in putting together an action plan. I'm told our forum will help government develop a comprehensive strategy to address HIV/AIDS in Saskatchewan.

It was my great privilege to represent the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at this conference.

***Brenda Storry**, a regular contributor to* Literacy Works, *recently graduated from the Bridging Program for Women in Regina.*

Movement for Canadian Literacy (MCL) Link

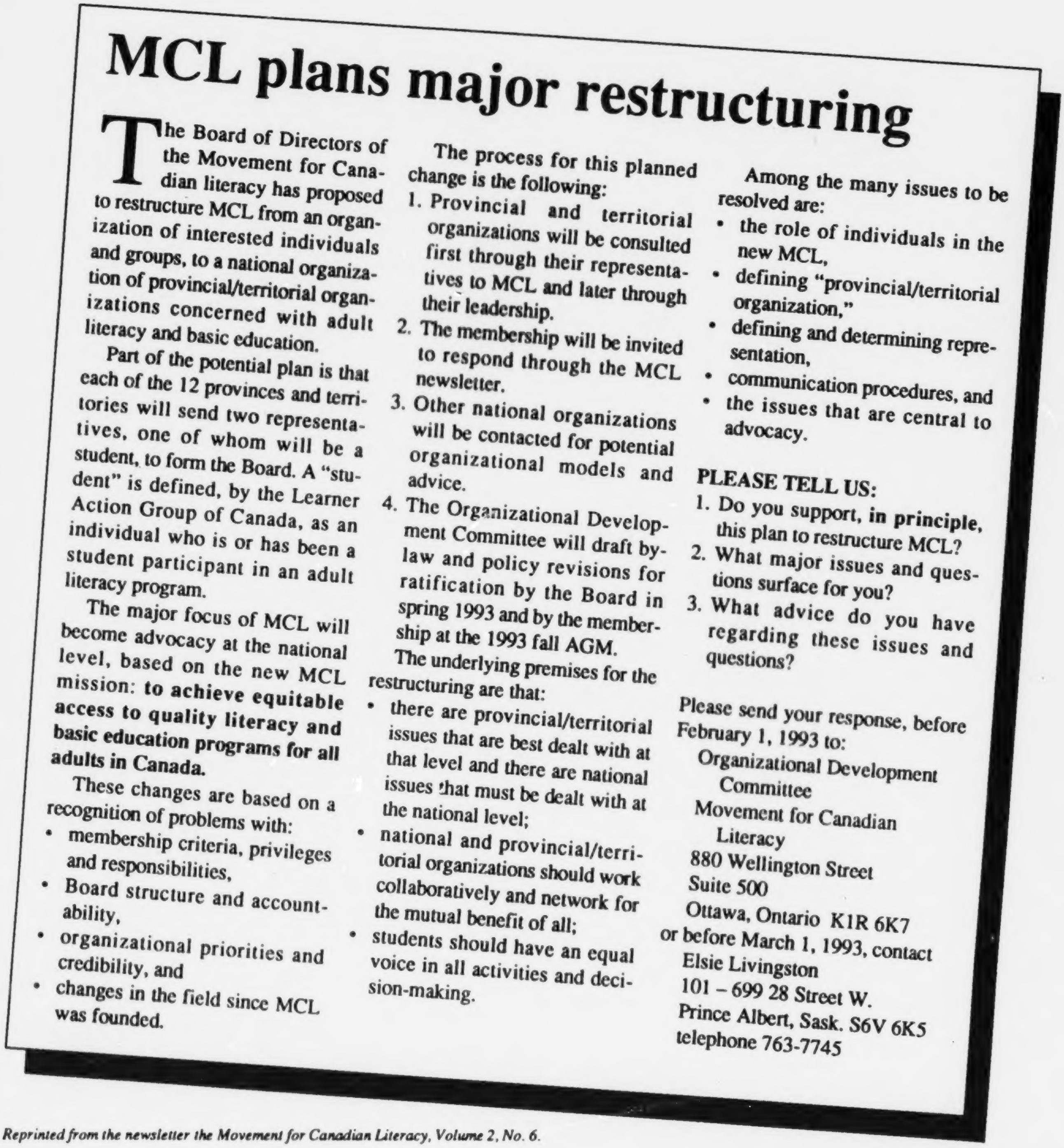
By Elsie Livingston

The Movement for Canadian Literacy met in October for the regular meeting and the Annual General Meeting. The main focus was the change in organizational structure and membership policy that is seen as being necessary in order to facilitate the incorporation of learners as equal partners on the Board of Directors of MCL. We see this move as one that will increase the effectiveness of MCL as a national advocacy and lobbying organization. The "Shared Voice" model was proposed to MCL in April, 1991 at the first MCL meeting I attended as your provincial representative. Incorporating this model will give MCL a dedicated and unique voice among literacy organizations. We believe it will make our organization accountable as well as provide an authentic voice when MCL speaks to governments and other organizations on the national and international scene.

Saskatchewan will be affected by having to reconsider the representation it now has on the MCL Board of Directors. The "Shared Voice" has been adopted in principle and we hope that by October, 1993, we will be asked to appoint two provincial representatives, at least one of whom is a learner. The expectation of MCL is that provincial organizations focused on literacy and Adult Basic Education will ensure that the provincial representatives fairly and faithfully represent all groups within the province.

As the Movement for Canadian Literacy is moving on and evolving, I, too, have decided to move on. I will continue to chair the Policy Committee of MCL and we have exciting work to do with continuing the debate about equitable access to education for adults which was sparked by *Organizing Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Canada.*

Thank you for the extraordinary experience of representing you at MCL meetings!



MCL plans major restructuring

The Board of Directors of the Movement for Canadian literacy has proposed to restructure MCL from an organization of interested individuals and groups, to a national organization of provincial/territorial organizations concerned with adult literacy and basic education.

Part of the potential plan is that each of the 12 provinces and territories will send two representatives, one of whom will be a student, to form the Board. A "student" is defined, by the Learner Action Group of Canada, as an individual who is or has been a student participant in an adult literacy program.

The major focus of MCL will become advocacy at the national level, based on the new MCL mission: **to achieve equitable access to quality literacy and basic education programs for all adults in Canada.**

These changes are based on a recognition of problems with:

- membership criteria, privileges and responsibilities,
- Board structure and accountability,
- organizational priorities and credibility, and
- changes in the field since MCL was founded.

The process for this planned change is the following:

1. Provincial and territorial organizations will be consulted first through their representatives to MCL and later through their leadership.
2. The membership will be invited to respond through the MCL newsletter.
3. Other national organizations will be contacted for potential organizational models and advice.
4. The Organizational Development Committee will draft by-law and policy revisions for ratification by the Board in spring 1993 and by the membership at the 1993 fall AGM.

The underlying premises for the restructuring are that:

- there are provincial/territorial issues that are best dealt with at that level and there are national issues that must be dealt with at the national level;
- national and provincial/territorial organizations should work collaboratively and network for the mutual benefit of all;
- students should have an equal voice in all activities and decision-making.

Among the many issues to be resolved are:

- the role of individuals in the new MCL,
- defining "provincial/territorial organization,"
- defining and determining representation,
- communication procedures, and
- the issues that are central to advocacy.

PLEASE TELL US:

1. Do you support, **in principle,** this plan to restructure MCL?
2. What major issues and questions surface for you?
3. What advice do you have regarding these issues and questions?

Please send your response, before February 1, 1993 to:

Organizational Development Committee
Movement for Canadian Literacy
880 Wellington Street
Suite 500
Ottawa, Ontario K1R 6K7

or before March 1, 1993, contact

Elsie Livingston
101 – 699 28 Street W.
Prince Albert, Sask. S6V 6K5
telephone 763-7745

Reprinted from the newsletter the Movement for Canadian Literacy, Volume 2, No. 6.

NETWORK NEWS

Provincial Learners Conference

The October conference was very successful with 33 participants representing 10 of the 15 literacy regions in Saskatchewan. The final report will be available this Spring.

The purpose of the conference was to develop leadership skills and to promote the regional learner support groups. One direct result was increased awareness about the provincial learners committee. At the last committee meeting, we were pleased to see representatives from two regions not previously represented: Prairie West Region and Carlton Trail Region.

Family Literacy

Bobbie Baker of Swift Current and Norma Klassen of Saskatoon attended the October Family Literacy symposium in Brooks, Alberta. Norma and Pat Hoffman of Regina attended the training for reading group leaders in November. Pat and Norma will be leading reading groups for parents with low literacy skills in their adult basic education programs in early 1993; they will be ready to offer training to others by Spring. In Saskatoon, training is scheduled for this March.

Bobbie Baker came back from the symposium with many ideas about how family literacy could be promoted in Saskatchewan. She suggests that the Network initiate the development of a major project to promote family literacy across the province; Interagency Forum participants could be part of the planning process. Saskatchewan Education, the National Literacy Secretariat, literacy regions, school divisions, the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, community agencies and business are potential collaborators. Contact the Network office if you would like to discuss this or are interested in starting a parent reading group and/or in attending the training.

Board

Evaluation

Lisa Talvak, a graduate student in Applied Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan, is conducting an evaluation of the Network's activities and its operating procedures. The purpose is to see how the Network can improve the way it operates and its service to the literacy community. We would really appreciate hearing your comments, observations or suggestions; pass on your "beefs" or "bouquets" to Lisa. She can be reached at the Network office on Thursdays. Lisa's report will be ready this May.

Committee Structure

The board accepted the recommendation of the *On Our Way* committee that the committee be dissolved. An Ad Hoc committee has been struck to reexamine the future of the paper in light of the ongoing funding uncertainties. The committee will meet in March when 1993-94 funding levels are more clear.

The next meeting of **Communications/ Marketing** and **Fundraising/Finance Committees** will be a joint one with the possibility that the committees may amalgamate because of the close overlap of their considerations.

On Our Way

The Network was sorry to accept the resignation of Sharon Skage, effective December 18, 1992. Sharon had been the editor of *On Our Way* since the paper first began in April 1990. Before that, she had edited *Pine Times*, the forerunner of the paper. We wish Sharon and her family all the best in their new home.

The Board was strongly committed to publishing the paper for the rest of the academic year. However, because the funding for the balance of 1992-93 is not yet in place, the Board could not consider hiring a replacement for Sharon. As an interim measure, the Board has asked Jan Herbert (illustrator of the New Writer series) to serve as interim editor. The Network office will deal with subscriptions and the SIAST Wascana literacy program will take over distribution. Jan will not have any students working directly in the production of the paper.

Literacy Works article reprinted

A review written by Elizabeth Slater and Sheila Cressman, which appeared in the Winter, 1992 issue of *Literacy Works*, was reprinted in the Fall, 1992 issue of *Literacy*, the journal of the Movement for Canadian Literacy.

Office Update

We purchased a new computer in October. The purpose of this upgrade was to prepare for the 1992-93 Computer Databank project. We plan to set up an information retrieval system for the literacy community and to serve as the provincial contact for the National Adult Literacy Database. Unfortunately, we have had six weeks of frustration in trying to get all the equipment set up. Hopefully, by the New Year, all the hardware and software will be in place.

We also upgraded our telephones, and got rid of "call waiting" which had been a frustration to us and many of you.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation

The Foundation is reexamining its mandate, granting guidelines and operation. The first meeting of the year was held on November 30. If you have ideas about how the Foundation should operate, please pass them on to Nayda Veeman at the Network office, 653-7178.

Matsushita Electric Awards

The Network is one of 200 literacy organizations across Canada to receive a Panasonic television/videocassette recorder from Matsushita Electric of Canada. The donations mark the company's 25th birthday. Other Saskatchewan recipients include Radius Tutoring, READ Saskatoon's learning centre in the Friendship Inn and READ Saskatoon's Project READY.

Doreen Anderson, facilitator at the Friendship Inn Learning Centre in Saskatoon, accepts the dontion of a Panasonic TV VCR unit from Dave Rempel, representative of Matsushita. Kimberley Onelin of Project READY looks on. Thanks to Kimberly for organizing the October 20 press conference, and to the Mayfair Library for hosting it.

WEST Program receives funding

The provincial government announced that Saskatchewan Education and Crown Investments Corporation will each provide $100,000 for the continuation of the Workers' Education for Skill Training Program for the 1992-93 year. This project began as a pilot project of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour in 1990 with National Literacy Secretariat funding.

Meet the executive

Saskatchewan Literacy Network executive members are (left to right) Gary Tolton, treasurer, Arliss Dellow, president and Duane Rose, vice president. Missing is Doreen Anderson, secretary.

Literacy Partnerships

A summary of the National Literacy Secretariat projects carried out in Saskatchewan during 1987-1991 is now available. Copies may be obtained from the Network office at no charge (send $2 for postage and handling).

New Literacy play

"Hiding on the Outside" is a new play about the literacy problems a woman faces when her husband dies. The play is 30 minutes long and would be an excellent start for a literacy event. (The premiere performance was at the Learners Today; Leaders Tomorrow Conference on October 15). To arrange for a presentation, contact: Plays for Living, Family Service Bureau, Saskatoon, telephone 244-0127. The cost is $400 plus travel expenses for the actors; this includes a facilitator to lead group discussion following the play.

Your chance to be on television

Brenda Storry, an active member of the Literacy Works editorial committee, is host of "Our Town, a talk show running on Cable Regina (Channel 7) every Friday morning from 10 to 11. Brenda is always looking for material for the program. Events, new books and any other literacy subjects are welcome. Call Brenda at home at 699-2567 or leave a message at Cable Regina, 569-3510.

In the works for *Literacy Works*

■

Our **Spring** issue will bring you updates on a number of literacy issues we've covered in the past, including:

Workplace Literacy
Family Literacy
Women and Literacy
Computer Literacy

We'll also be covering some new topics, such as:

Literacy and the Hearing Impaired
Literacy and the Mentally Handicapped
Business Literacy

■

Issues in the works for the **Summer** and **Fall** of 1993 are:

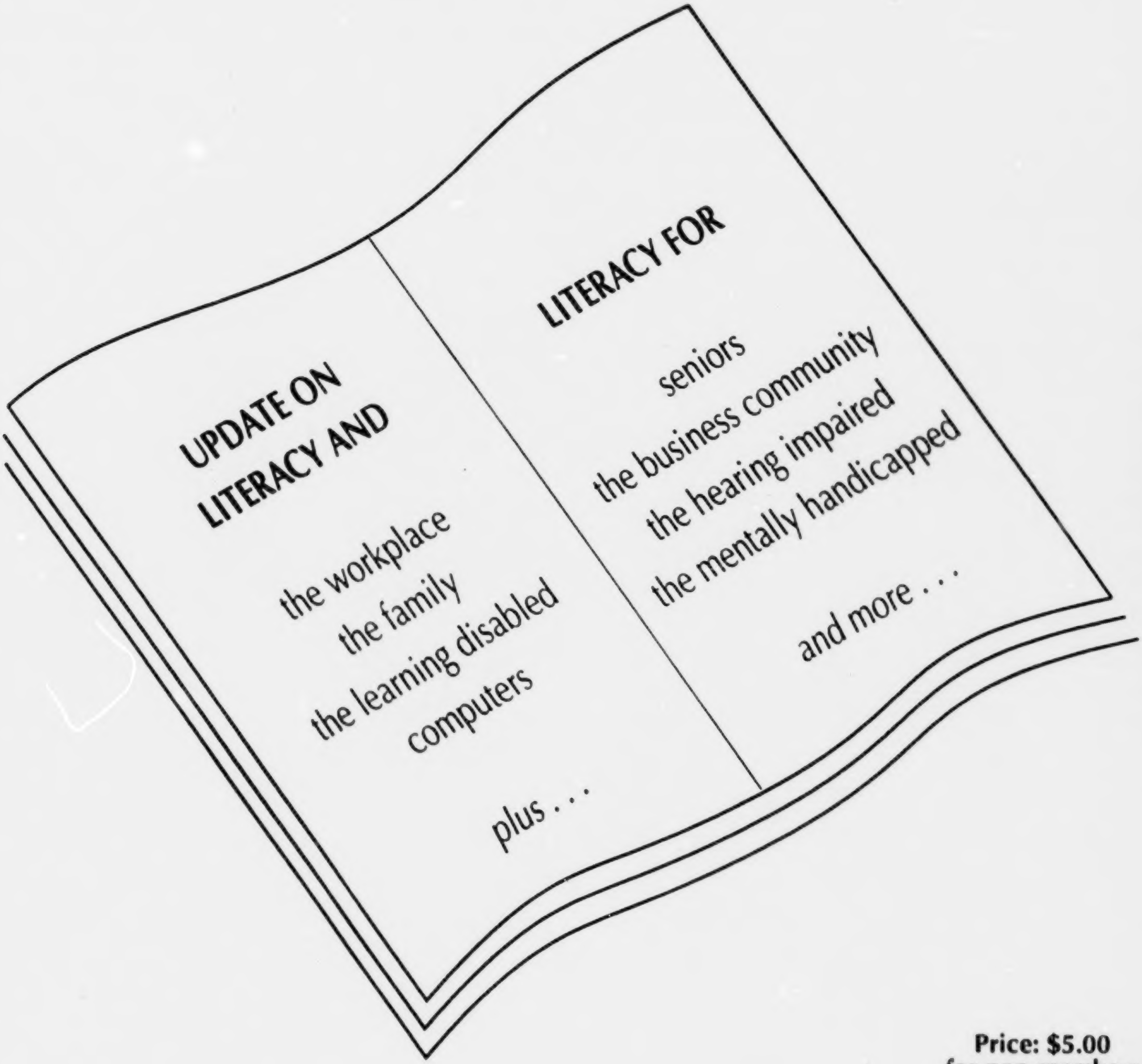
Indian Education and Literacy
Literacy and International Development

■

If you have ideas for any of these issues, or other ideas for *Literacy Works*, please call the Network office in Saskatoon, 653-7178, or Liz Ormiston, *Literacy Works* editor, in Regina, 757-7236.

LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 4, No. 3 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network **Spring 1993**



UPDATE ON LITERACY AND

the workplace
the family
the learning disabled
computers

plus . . .

LITERACY FOR

seniors
the business community
the hearing impaired
the mentally handicapped

and more . . .

Price: $5.00
for non-members
(includes tax)

Editorial Committee this issue
Ved Arora, Brenda Storry, Ron Torgerson

Literacy Works Editor
Liz Ormiston

Contributors this issue
Ron Torgerson, Debbie Purton, Norma Klassen, Sharon Skage, Joe Hilbig, Ruth Quiring, Ruth Epstein, Diane Mullen, Donna Hudson and Louise Folk, Tom Holcomb and Joyce Kreeft Peyton, Angela Tessier and Carolyn Buffie, Bonnie Pasqua, John Harold

Desktop Publishing
Lines & Letters

Printing
SIAST Wascana Campus

ISSN Number: 1183-3793

Saskatchewan Literacy Network Charitable Number: *0896225-21*

Back issues of Literacy Works available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family Literacy
Vo. 3, No. 4	Special Issue on Literacy Resources
Vol. 4, No. 1	New Canadians and Literacy
Vol 4, No. 2	Literacy and Learning Disabilities

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

Contents

EDITOR'S NOTE 2

UPDATES . . .

Workers' education for skills training back in action by Ron Torgerson 3

Saskatchewan literacy workers to receive training about learning disabilities by Debbie Purton 5

"A Family Literacy Symposium" by Norma Klassen 6

How to rewrite materials in plain English by Sharon Skage 10

Adult learners enjoy computer-assisted-instruction by Joe Hilbig 12

ESL Teacher — Double Duty by Ruth Quiring 13

TUTORING TIPS: The jigsaw reading technique by Ruth Epstein 15

EMERGING LITERACY CONCERNS

Seniors' literacy programs needed by Diane Mullan 18

Developing awareness of literacy needs in Regina's business community by Donna Hudson and Louise Folk 20

ESL literacy for a linguistic minority: the deaf experience by Tom Holcomb and Joy Kreeft Peyton 22

Literacy and the mentally handicapped: focus on our abilities, not disabilities by Angela Tessier and Carolyn Buffie 25

WRITE ON 26

COMMENTARY by John Harold 28

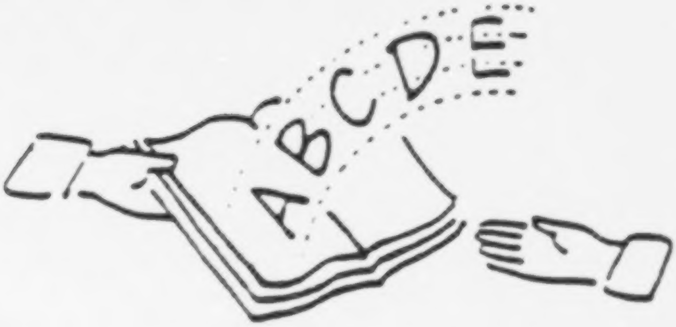
NETWORK NEWS 30

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK 31

***Funding for this issue of* Literacy Works**
was provided by
Saskatchewan Education.

FL 800 753

Editor's Note



Since we began publishing in 1990, each issue of *Literacy Works* has had a theme or focus: women and literacy, family literacy, computer literacy, to name only a few. In this issue, we present updates on a of number literacy-related topics covered in previous issues, plus articles on some newly-emerging literacy concerns.

Our Fall, 1990 issue looked at **Literacy and the Workplace**. In this issue, Ron Torgerson gives an update on the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's Workers' Education for Skills Training (WEST) program.

Following up on our Winter, 1993 issue, Debbie Purton of Parkland Regional College in Yorkton brings an update on the innovative work being done on literacy and **learning disabilities** there.

Family Literacy has been a major focus of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network, and the Spring 1992 issue of *Literacy Works* focused on the growth of family literacy programs across Canada. In this issue, Norma Klassen looks at some of the findings discussed at the Family Literacy Symposium, held in Brooks, Alberta last Fall.

Plain Language was the focus of our Winter 1992 issue, and, in this issue, Sharon Skage gives us some pointers for writing in plain language.

In our June, 1990 issue, we looked at **computer literacy**. Here, Joe Hilbig of SIAST talks about computer-assisted-instruction and its advantages in workir with adult learners.

In the Fall of 1992, we focused on **Literacy and New Canadians**. Ruth Quiring now shares her experiences as a English as a Second Language teacher.

Emerging areas of literacy covered in this issue are the **literacy needs of seniors**, **literacy for workers employed in the business community**, **literacy and the hearing impaired** and **literacy and the mentally handicapped**.

Learner writings have been an important part of *Literacy Works* and in this issue we present a poem by a learner about a woman trying to get off the street. We also run a **humorous essay** about trying to break into literacy volunteer work, by John Harold.

And in **Tutoring Tips**, Ruth Epstein talks about the jigsaw learning technique.

Happy reading!

Workers' education for skills training back in action

By Ron Torgerson

In January of 1992 I co-instructed a training course for the Workers' Education for Skills Training (WEST) program with Lori Stinson-O'Gorman, the literacy coordinator with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL). In many respects it was an exercise in "whistling while walking past the graveyard." In 1989, WEST had secured a $50,000 grant from the national Literacy Secretariat to deveolp a workplace-based literacy program modeled on the Ontario Federation of Labour's successful Basic Education for Skills Training (BEST) program.

WEST is a worker-controlled union program run with the co-operation and assistance of the employer. It focuses on reading, writing and math at all levels as well as critical thinking and problem solving.

From the first grant through to the Spring of 1992, Lori operated with a shoestring budget, often not knowing if there would be adequate funding to cover her paycheque the next month. Lori finally had to secure an offer of employment at the University of Regina. After accepting this position, she received a promise of funding from the provincial Department of Education to continue the WEST program. Shoftly after, Barb Byers, president of the SFL, obtained additional funding from Crown Investments Corporation for a coordinator to deal with Saskatchewan's Crown Corporations. During the last week of October, 1992, I came on staff as WEST coordinator at the SFL, and the following week Debbie Heagy joined me.

During the four to five months that the program was in a hiatus, the existing classes across the province received no support. Most folded. Our goal was to resurrect classes wherever possible, train a new batch of instructors in February, 1993, and try to have 30 classes functioning across the province by the end of 1993. We also wanted to participate in the Saskatchewan Literacy Network and the Regina Literacy Association, as well as make contact with our sister programs in Ontario and the Maritimes.

We soon discovered that setting goals is easy. Delivering the goods is much more difficult. By January, we were forced to admit that the first instructor training session would have to be postponed until the beginning of March. We had counted on a dozen instructors being trained

continued . . .

Workers' education for skills training *continued*

during the first session, but were told by one employer two weeks before the scheduled start of training that their plans for four to six classes had to be put on hold until summer. This not only jeopardized our goals, but also threatened to force a delay in our training plans until August. As many of the classes we had negotiated with unions and employers were pilot programs, an expansion relied on the success of these pilots, a delay until August would mean that we could not possibly reach our goals for the year.

Debbie got back in her car, drove to Saskatoon and camped out on the doorstep of hesitant employers. I got back in my car, and drove to Moose Jaw, Porcupine Plain and points between. Debbie made numerous evening presentations in Saskatoon, while I offered to personally guarantee traveling expenses to potential instructors.

On March 7, Debbie, myself and the next batch of WEST instructors will arrive at St. Peter's Abbey in Muenster for the first training session. By April there should be seven or eight more WEST classes in Saskatchewan. In July, we'll evaluate the pilot programs and then train more instructors for more programs in August. WEST is back in operation, and we're here to stay!

***Ron Torgerson** has been a coordinator for the WEST program since November, 1992. Previously, he worked at SaskTel in engineering systems. He is past president of the Regina Labour Council.*

SPECIAL PRICE

A set of five volumes of writings by new Saskatchewan writers and recent immigrants to Canada is available for $25 (includes postage). Included are:

***Struggles and Growth*, Volumes I, II and III**
These are beautifully illustrated stories, poems and essays by new Saskatchewan writers. (regular price $6/volume plus $1 postage)

***Memories and Dreams*, Volumes I and II**
These are stories by recent immigrants to Canada focusing on their struggle to make a new life. (regular price $5/volume plus $1 postage)

A 10% discount is available for orders of 10 or more copies.

Available from:
Saskatchewan Literacy Network, Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5,
telephone (306) 653-7178, fax (306) 933-6490.

The printing of *Struggles and Growth* and *Memories and Dreams* is funded by
the Canadian Give the Gift of Literacy Foundation.

Saskatchewan literacy workers to receive training about learning disabilities

By Debbie Purton

Parkland Regional College and the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan have received funding from the National Literacy Secretariat of the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada to undertake a joint project entitled "Assisting Literacy Workers to Enhance the Literacy Skills of Adults with Learning Disabilities."

The primary objectives of this project are:

- to provide training and sensitization for literacy workers within Saskatchewan on the identification of, and appropriate teaching strategies for, adults with learning disabilities;
- to develop a reference handbook for volunteer tutors and practitioners which will address the reading comprehension difficulties experienced by many adults with learning disabilities;
- to develop links between the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan and the literacy community within the province; and
- to encourage and support the development of appropriate literacy programs for adults with learning disabilities.

The project began in February, 1993 with the completion date scheduled for June 30, 1993. To date, project accomplishments have included:

- establishment of initial contact between the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan and the literacy community;
- preparation of an in-service workshop to train literacy tutors and practitioners in the use of recommended screening and teaching methods;
- promotion and scheduling of in-service workshops on a regional basis as follows:

  March 27 – Parkland Regional College, Yorkton

  April 3 — Carlton Trail Regional College, Humboldt

  April 17 — North West Regional College, Meadow Lake

  April 24 — Southeast Regional College, Weyburn
- development of reference handbook materials.

If you are interested in hosting an in-service workshop within your region, or require additional information on specific project objectives, please contact:

Debbie Purton, Literacy Coordinator
Parkland Regional College
72 Melrose Avenue
Yorkton, Saskatchewan S3N 1Z2
Telephone (306) 783-6566

or

Laurie Garcia, Executive Director
Learning Disabilities Association
of Saskatchewan
Albert Community Centre
610 Clarence Avenue South, Room #26
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7H 2E2
Telephone (306) 652-4114

***Debbie Purton**, Literacy Coordinator with the Parkland Regional College, has been involved in several national projects targeting adults with learning disabilities. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Learning Disabilities Association of Saskatchewan.*

THE ROOTS OF LITERACY

"A Family Literacy Symposium"

Brooks, Alberta — October 2 and 3, 1992

By Norma Klassen

The roots of literacy suggest a metaphor that aptly describes the philosophy of family literacy. Just as the roots of a tree are nurtured, fed and watered by the rich black soil, warming sun and quenching rain, so too are the child's reading, writing and language nurtured, guided and supported by the literacy environment within the home during the preschool years. These early years from birth to age six or seven have an immeasurable impact on the emerging literacy of the child. The family environment will largely determine his or her beliefs about and actions towards literacy. The parents' love of reading, interactive sharing of books and positive relationship with the school become the nurturing, guiding and supporting elements in the young child's growth towards full literacy.

Family literacy views our nation's literacy crisis in a preventative sense by seeking to positively impact the child in the preschool years.

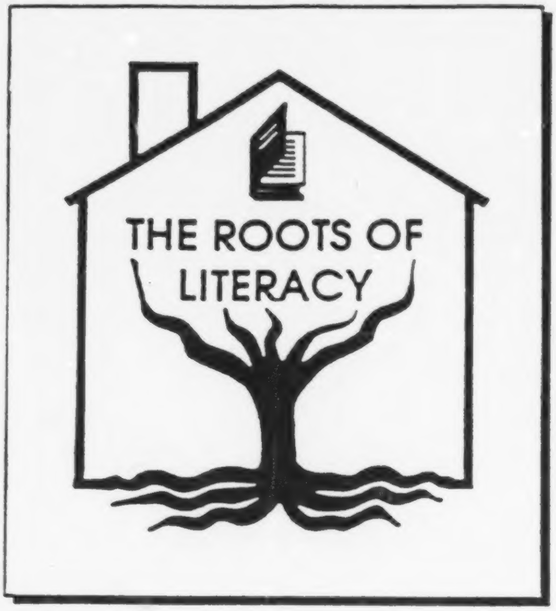
This underlying philosophy, printed on the "Roots of Literacy" program was the basis for the Brooks symposium. The symposium provided a format for participants to learn about:

1. family literacy programming in Alberta
2. research-based justification for family literacy programs
3. strategies for parent/child storyreading and
4. collaboration with "key players" in implementing family literacy programming

It was sponsored by the Medicine Hat College and funded jointly by Secretary of State and the Alberta government.

Family Literacy Projects — Small Group Sessions

The two day symposium began with small group sessions on seven Alberta family literacy programs and one project from England. The "Latin American Literacy Partnership" in Calgary and the "Cappill Family Literacy Project" in Edmonton are examples of full day programs involving both parents and children. "Homespun" in Brooks provides weekly workshops for parents in reading to their children. It also provides training for group leaders. "Wetaskiwin Little Pals" in Wetaskiwin trains tutors to work with school-identified children showing early reading difficulties and provides workshops for parents on family reading. The "Home Language and Literacy Project" in Calgary is a YWCA-run project with one-to-one home tutoring for new Canadians, involving both mother and child. The "Pal Project" in Pincher Creek provides one-to-one tutoring for students who have difficulty in school and provides training for tutors on individual learning and reading styles. "Books for Babies" provides books and information on reading to



children to new mothers while still in the hospital. "Read With Your Children" from England was an event held in conjunction with the International Year of the Child.

I attended the "Homespun" and the "Latin American Literacy Partnership" sessions. On a "Homespun" video, parents claimed increased literacy activities and skills, improved self-esteem, and happier relationships with their children. After four months in the Latin American Literacy Partnership "project," Spanish-speaking children, given standardized testing, made an average gain of over a year-and-a half in emergent reading skills. These are only two examples of the positive impact of family literacy projects.

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Ruth Nickse

Dr. Ruth Nickse is an educational psychologist from Brookland, Massachusetts, with a background in adult education and early childhood education. She has researched and written extensively in the area of family literacy. During the two days of the symposium, Dr. Nickse gave presentations that were research-based, experience-based, highly practical, insightful and compassionate.

1. Family and Intergenerational Literacy Programs: Spotlight on Reciprocal Learning

Nickse reported on the practice of family and intergenerational programming and development in the U.S. She presented a typology of generic program models, their key components, advantages and disadvantages of each and evaluation approaches. She spoke extensively of her involvement in the evaluation of "Even Start," the U.S. government's initiative to integrate the agendas of adult basic skills improvement and children's literacy development. The mandate of the Even Start programs was: 1) to work with "at risk" families to promote adult literacy; 2) to train parents to support the educational growth of their children; 3) to prepare children for success in regular school programs; and 4) to provide "family-centred" educational programs. Nickse also presented an interdisciplinary research base for family literacy and identified issues and concerns in family literacy programming.

continued . . .

An Invitation

Have you come across a new
or interesting literacy resource lately?
one that you think other ESL or ABE
practitioners would find helpful
in their classroom/tutoring work?
or one that learners might like
to read on their own?
or one that literacy programmers
might find helpful in their work?

Literacy Works is interested in setting up a regular section with short write-ups on literacy resources, as well as longer resource reviews. If you don't have time to do the write-up or review yourself, just drop us a line or call us with the basic information about the resource, and we'll find someone to do the writing.

Call the Network office
in Saskatoon, 653-7178,
or Liz Ormiston, *Literacy Works* editor,
in Regina, 757-7236
with your suggestions.

"A Family Literacy Symposium" *continued*

2. "Read It Again — Insights Into Storybook Reading"

   In this highly practical workshop Nickse explored 1) the values of storybook reading, 2) the effective components of storybook reading and 3) storybook reading strategy.

3. "The Collaborations for Family Literacy" (or "How to Get a Bigger Bang for Your Buck")

   Nickse sees family literacy programming not in terms of adding on services, but of combining services to increase effectiveness and decrease cost.

   In this presentation Nickse gave a summary of the process of collaboration between community agencies, based on the experience of communities in the U.S. with "Even Start" programming. The presentation covered advantages, methods, barriers, and issues in collaboration.

My Reactions

I found the Brooks symposium to be highly valuable in gaining information, gathering resources, making contacts and sparking ideas.

For more information on family literacy projects and resources discussed at the symposium, contact the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at 653-7168.

***Norma Klassen** has worked in Adult Basic Education for ten years. A mother of two, she is interested in family literacy on both a professional and a personal level.*

Some Resources and References Mentioned at the Symposium

Becoming a Nation of Readers. Urbana, Il: Center for the study of Reading, University of Illinois, 1985.

Reading, Writing, Thinking for Life. Trillium Press, Suite 200, 203 College Street, Toronto, ON, M5T 1P9. ISBN 0-89824-413-7.

How to Add Family Literacy to Your Program. Literacy Volunteers of America, Inc. 5795 Widewaler Parkway, Syracruse, NY 13214, 1991. ISBN 0-930713-78-8. LVA Order #49004.

Family Reading: An Intergenerational Approach to Literacy (Manual for Trainers) — New Readers Press, Laubach Literacy International, Box 131, Syracruse, NY 13210, 1990. ISBN 0-88336-989-3.

The Mechanics for Success for Families, Evaluation Report #2, Illinois Literacy Resource Development Centre, 200 South Fredrick, Ratoul, IL 61866, Ph: (217) 983-1318, 1990.

Building Community Collaborations for Literacy: A Handbook, Nickse, R. with Quezada, S. Boston, MA, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, in press, 1992.

Adult Literacies: Intersections with Elementary and Secondary Education. Special Anthology: Hot Topics in Education, Nickse, R. "The Noises of Literacy: Intergeneration and Family Literacy Projects — A Summary", Edited by A. Newman and C. Beverstock, Phi Delta Kappan, 1991.

Family and Intergenerational Literacy: An Update of "The Noises of Literacy", Nickse, R., 1990.

The Noises of Literacy: An Overview of Intergenerational and Family Literacy Programs, Nickse, R., 1989.

Collaborations for Literacy: An Intergenerational Reading Project. Administrator's Handbook, Nickse, R. and Englander, N. Boston, MA: Trustees of Boston University, 1985.

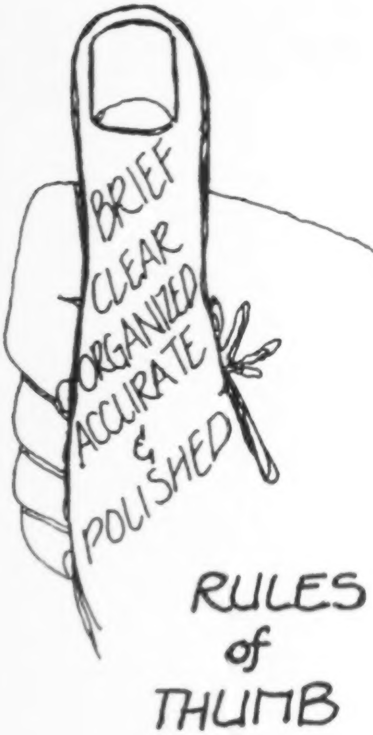
Collaborations for Literacy: An Intergenerational Reading Project. Tutor's Handbook, Styros, J., Winig, L. and Nickse, R., Boston, MA: Trustees of Boston University, 1985.

How to rewrite materials in plain English

By Sharon Skage

General Guidelines

- Keep your reader in mind!
- Simplify the language, not the ideas.
- Keep at it! One draft simply won't do. When you have finished the first draft, leave it for a day or two if possible. Then go back to it. You'll notice ways to further shorten and simplify your writing.
- Instructors will need to assist their students, especially with the first steps in the simplifying process (identifying the thesis statement and the topic sentences). Many students have difficulty with these reading/writing skills.



The Process

1. Read the material you want to simplify at least twice. Make sure you understand it. Look up words you don't understand.
2. What is the article about? What is the "big idea" (the thesis statement)? Use this as your title. You will restate it in your first (or maybe your second) paragraph. You may use it again in your last paragraph.
3. Each paragraph should have one main idea (the topic sentence). Depending on the author, the paragraphs may have more than one main idea. Write down in point form what these main ideas are. Do it as simply and briefly as possible.

   When summarizing the main ideas in each paragraph, try to answer these questions:

   who (or what) is this article about?
   what happened?
   when did it happen?
   where did it happen?
   why and/or how did it happen?
4. Are all of these points necessary to tell the story? Simplified writing must be short, or adult learners will not read it. There is no room for details that are not necessary. Get rid of the extra points by crossing them out.
5. Are the remaining main ideas in the right order? If not, arrange them so the story makes sense.
6. Without looking at the original material, write out these points in sentence form. Keep the sentences short and simple, and remember that there should only be one main idea for each paragraph.

7. Put any lists in point form.
8. Avoid sentences with clauses, passive construction, abbreviations, acronyms, unfamiliar words, contractions, and idioms.

   Clause:

   "Sharon, who liked to use big words, found it difficult to write in plain English."

   "Sharon liked to use big words. She found it difficult to write in plain English."

   Passive Construction:

   "It was decided by the Board that it should get a raise."

   "The Board decided that it should get a raise."

   Abbreviations:

   Sask. Literacy Network

   Acronyms:

   S.L.N., P.G.C.C., S.I.A.S.T.

   Unfamiliar words:

   Could be technical or legal language or jargon.

   Contractions:

   "couldn't:, "I'll"
   "could not", "I will"

   Idioms:

   "birds of a feather", "toe the line"
9. Read over your writing. Make a list of "problem words." These are words that are difficult to read because of their length (over two or three syllables, depending on your reader), their meaning, or the way they are spelled.
10. For each problem word, come up with a simpler way of saying it. (This is often easier when done with another person or in a group.) You may need two or more words to replace one long one. Don't change the meaning!
11. Don't simplify titles, names of organizations, names of events, etc. When you have to include difficult words, add a footnote at the bottom with a pronunciation guide and a definition.
12. Write another draft of the material, using the new words instead of the "problem" words. Make any changes necessary to make the writing easier to read and to understand. You may want to repeat the "big idea" in the last paragraph as a way of summing up.

    Also check for essential information (the "five W's + H" mentioned earlier).
13. Include a credit to the author of the original material, and a credit to the person/people who rewrote it in plain English.
14. You can assess the "grade level" of your writing by using different methods. General guidelines for length are: no more than 50-60 words for beginning readers, and 175-200 for intermediate readers.

This article was originally published in the Literacy Program Newsletter, *Cumberland Regional College.*

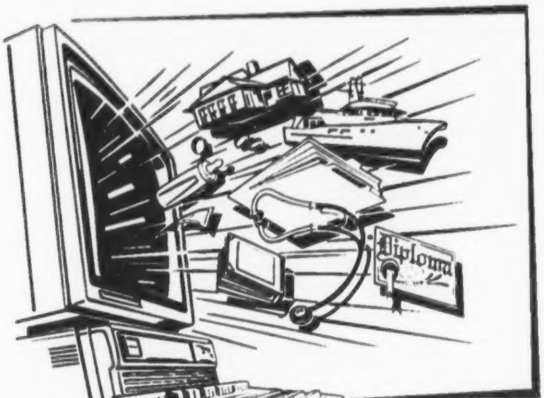
***Sharon Skage** is the former editor of* On Our Way, *the plain language newspaper published by the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.*

Adult learners enjoy computer-assisted-instruction

By Joe Hilbig

As part of their Grade 1-10 upgrading course almost all the students at Kelsey Institute in Saskatoon spend some time working with computers. They use a computer-assisted-instruction/computer-managed-learning (CAI/CML) program from Computer Curriculum Corporation, marketed by Columbia Institute of Canada in Calgary. The program runs on eight IBM PS 2 model 30 computers connected to a file-server (a more powerful computer that has all the information for all eight "terminals"). The terminals, file server, seven additional "stand-alone" MS-DOS computers, and one instructor (myself) occupy one room in our facility. Students spend about one hour every second day in the computer room. We began to use the system in September, 1991.

The system has a very large, integrated program that presents lessons, practice drills and short tests to students. It records results, and, based on the students' performances, prescribes new exercises. We have material available in Math, Communications, Science and Computer Literacy, from a basic (non-reading) literacy level to Grade 11. Time constraints dictate that we actually use about six of the more than 30 courses available. The choice of course(s) for any student depends on that student's present skill/knowledge level in a subject. The starting point in a given course can be adjusted by the instructor at any time as well as by the program as it determines progress and problem areas.



We have found the courses to be of variable value, but on the whole, interesting, comprehensive and quite sophisticated.

We are most impressed with the courses in Communications and Physics. Students like them and seem to learn the concepts and skills fairly painlessly. Most (not all) of the courses make excellent use of the graphics/colour capability of our hardware (VGA), and some of them even use very good digitised voice.

As with any Computer Assisted Instruction (CAI) system, the computers and their programs must form only one part of an integrated learning environment. Teachers decide what part of the total package a student will use based on consultation, tests and program-generated reports. Teachers monitor progress and change student programs as necessary.

I see many benefits in using a CAI system, and this one in particular. This is a new, or simply another way of learning for our students, and what is learned is often learned faster and in greater depth, and is retained longer. The novelty (including the fact of its being a break from the regular classroom) is a motivation. The high-tech image helps too. The computer provides an ever-patient, always-ready-to-help "instructor," and (very important) provides instant feedback and correction. Students are often willing to do more work when the computer assigns it (one question at a time) than they would for a human instructor. Anonymity seems to be a factor; some students who are embarrassed by their lack of education — to the point where they will not ask for help — can learn easily at the computer because the machine is not capable of laughing at them. Finally, the "computer instructor" (that's me) is having a marvellous year. My relationship with the students is subtly changed from that of, among other things, a task-master, to one of partner in accomplishing what the system requires.

***Joe Hilbig** has taught Adult Basic Education since 1984. He taught first at the Saskatoon Region Community College, and then for the Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) where he has taught Math and Science and, for three years, in a Plato (another Computer-Assisted-Instruction) lab.*

ESL Teacher — Double Duty

By Ruth Quiring

They say a woman's work is never done but I think somebody should include English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in that definition. As teachers of English as a Second Language to adults who are new to Canada, we have a two-fold task. We must orient our students to the Canadian way of life as well as teach them skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening comprehension. Sometimes we must be willing to give up a coffee break to help a student write out her children's names in English. Even though she didn't read or write in her own language, now that she is learning to read and write in English, it is very important for her to be able to accomplish this feat. What greater motivation for a mother to become literate than to be able to read and write her own children's names! Other times we must be willing to give up part of a lunch hour to call Canada Health and Welfare to find out why a family allowance cheque has not arrived or to phone SaskTel to find out why a student's bill seems unreasonably high. Then there are the after-school trips. A nursing mother is unsure about when to take her baby off breast milk and when to begin giving the baby cow's milk and solid foods. Rather than give my own advice (MY baby is almost 17 so my methods are

continued . . .

ESL Teacher — Double Duty *continued*

totally out of date!), I make a doctor's appointment for the student and I accompany her so I'll know the whole story without having to guess at her interpretation and translation of what the doctor said.

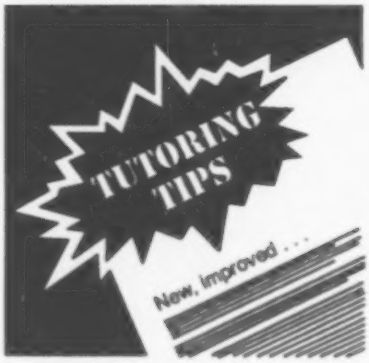
Then there are the many evening phone calls from present and former students who just want to say "hi." Many students have called just to hear a friendly voice in a strange land where often the teacher is the only English speaker they know. Or there are those who call who need some advice or information on a variety of subjects. One student got herself into trouble with the licensing bureau when she tried to sneak some sample questions into the drivers' test. Another student has moved on to a higher level English class and calls for answers about what the "Schwa" sound is and who "The Lord of the Flies" is. These calls sometimes interrupt supper, a quiet family evening or a romantic evening at home with my husband.

Over the years, though, my family has become very involved in my work. They've met people from almost every country in the world and gained an understanding about the variety and uniqueness of the world's cultures. They cannot understand the prejudice and racism of some of their family and friends because they know how kind and good the people of China, Vietnam, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Korea, Portugal, etc., are. They have come to this acceptance of people through visiting the students' homes, tasting their food, attending their cultural and family celebrations, talking to them on the phone and showing them hospitality in our home. They've gone to the hospital to welcome precious newborn babies of every colour and they've dragged themselves out of bed on Saturday morning to go down to the bus depot to say good-bye to a student and his family who were going off to their fortune in a bigger city.

Yes, being an ESL teacher demands a lot of time and effort but it has become more than six hours a day in the classroom. It has become a way of life for the whole family.

***Ruth Quiring** taught Adult Basic Education for 12 years and has taught English as a Second Language at the ESL Centre, Wascana Campus, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology in Regina for the past five and half years.*

WINDOW ON THE WORLD



Literacy through cooperative learning: the jigsaw reading technique

By Ruth Epstein

Cooperative learning is based on the concept that when students learn together in small groups, the individual learning of each group member increases. Cooperative learning differs from group tasks where everyone may or may not contribute and where the responsibility for absorption of the material lies with the individual. In cooperative learning, each student must work with the others in the group to complete the task.

Cooperative learning has many advantages. It increases student independence, promotes peer teaching, can be used in multi-level classrooms, in all age groups and in a variety of content areas. It promotes individual and group responsibility, avoids dominance by one group member, creates peer acceptance and understanding, develops social skills and aids teachers in assessment.

The students' responsibilities in cooperative learning are to work on the assigned tasks as a cooperative group. Each student is responsible for the success or failure of the others. If Student A does not help Student B, then both students will fail.

The teacher's role is to set up reasonable, realistic, challenging activities, and communicate the rules for carrying out those activities. The rules should be conducive to the philosophy of cooperation. Once a teacher has clearly laid out the tasks and motivated the activity, she or he should step back, acting only as a facilitator so that students can use their inventiveness and creativity to solve the problem.

How the Jigsaw Technique Works

The following jigsaw reading exercise is designed to help students practice vocabulary already learned. Normally, a teacher would do some pre-reading activities, such as identifying new vocabulary on the board or through exercises, using pictures to identify the topic and giving students a purpose for reading.

Materials: The teacher develops four texts (named A, B, C and D). Each text is different, but related to the others. For example, the teacher may devise four different texts on a single topic, such as the effects of smoking. Or, the teacher may devise four different points of view on a car accident. Or, the teacher may devise four different texts, each of which is part of a whole story. Each reading contains text with or without visuals, and exercises. Students are asked to complete the reading and do the exercises. It is important to develop exercises for each text to help students cover the skill you are working on at the time, e.g., vocabulary, comprehension of details, inference questions, sentence structure, and so on.

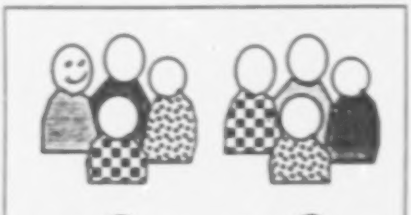
continued . . .

Literacy through cooperative learning *continued*

Jigsaw Groups

First, students are put into groups of four — their jigsaw groups. Within these groups, each person is assigned a different letter: A, B, C, D, which will correspond to an assigned text (A, B, C, D). If necessary, the teacher ensures that the students get to know each other within their jigsaw groups by having them participate in an ice-breaking exercise.

It is preferable for the teacher to assign jigsaw groups rather than let the students group themselves. It is best to mix abilities in jigsaw groups so that stronger students can help weaker ones. The students' jigsaw group is like their home team. Students realize that they are responsible for the success or failure of everyone on their team. They are responsible for communicating the information they learn in their expert groups. Before moving into their expert groups, students are told to remember who is in their home team, or jigsaw group, because they will reassemble later to share and be tested on what they have learned in their expert groups.



Each Jigsaw Group includes:

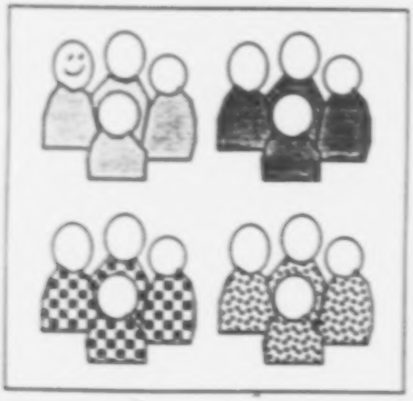
A
B C
D

Expert Groups

Next, the teacher divides students into expert groups by putting all of the A's in one group, all of the B's in another, etc. The teacher informs the groups that it is the task of everyone in the expert group to ensure that everyone else in that group thoroughly understands what they read.

The teacher passes out the reading texts lettered A, B, C, and D. Following is an example of how she may proceed to help the expert groups through their assignment.

1. Read your passage through once for general comprehension.
2. Read the passage again, and make sure you know all of the vocabulary.
3. Do the vocabulary and comprehension questions.
4. Check the vocabulary and comprehension questions in your expert group, so that you are sure you can teach the story and vocabulary to your jigsaw group later.
5. Consult your teacher if there is something you don't understand.
6. Take the identity of the writer of the story and roleplay with your neighbour how you will tell your story and teach new vocabulary when you rejoin your jigsaw group.



Expert Groups include:

All A's

All B's

All C's

All D's

Jigsaw Groups Revisited

Next, students are directed to return to their jigsaw groups. Within their jigsaw groups, each person should take a turn to explain the content of his or her reading. The teacher instructs students to ensure that everyone in the group understands every aspect of the text for everyone else in the jigsaw group. The teacher gives each student a time limit, but ensures that there is sufficient time to complete the task. Others in the group should ask questions to get clarification. The teacher also instructs students how much total time the group has before it will be tested as a group. The teacher tells the students that the test will include questions from all texts, and that the jigsaw groups will receive a group mark depending upon how well each individual in the group achieved on the test.

Testing

Next, students write the test. The teacher may test the group as a whole, or individuals in the group. Papers are marked, and jigsaw groups receive a grade. If the teacher tests individuals in the group, it is best not to reveal which group member(s) pulled down a jigsaw group's grade to avoid having students accuse each other of inadequate performance.

It is desireable to receive feedback from the students and build an awareness of cooperation by asking questions such as: How did your group do in the test? How could you have done better? What did you observe about the group interactions? What did you observe about the story used? What did you think was most effective in this exercise? What did you think was least effective?

Teachers can create jigsaw reading exercises using the following steps.

1. Find an appropriate text(s), and think of ways to adapt it for a jigsaw reading exercise.
2. Divide the reading into sections, or devise different versions of the same story for expert groups.
3. Formulate some exercises that will help students read and understand difficult words and sentences in their expert groups which will later be shared in jigsaw groups.
4. Be sure the format of the exercises is such that students can take back the information to their jigsaw groups.
5. Formulate some guidelines for discussion for jigsaw groups.
6. Devise a short test to evaluate jigsaw groups' comprehension of text(s).

(Plow, 1990)

References

Coelho, E. (1982) Creative Jigsaw Units for the ESL Classroom: How to develop units for cooperative learning in the communicative curriculum. TEST Talk, 13 (3), 128-136. Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Culture.

Coelho, E. (1985/86) Jigsaw Reading Activity Kits: Dupukits. Dominie Press.

Plow, K. (1990) Cooperative Learning Jigsaw Materials. Unpublished master's thesis. School for International Training, Brattleboro, VT.

***Ruth Epstein** is an instructional designer with the Extension Division, University of Saskatchewan. She holds an M.A. in Teaching English as a Second Language from the School for International Training in Vermont. She has taught ESL in Saskatchewan, Mexico, Japan, Indonesia and Taiwan.*

Do you have a useful tutoring exercise or technique you'd like to write about for *Literacy Works*? Call the Network Office in Saskatoon, 653-7178 or Liz Ormiston, editor, in Regina, 757-7236.

Seniors' literacy programs needed

By Diane Mullan

Sixty-five percent of older adults (age 55 and over) in Saskatchewan are functionally illiterate, according to estimates by Statistics Canada based on the *Survey of Literacy Skills Used in Daily Activities, Reading and Numeracy (Summer 1990).* This means that more than 143,000 seniors in Saskatchewan may have difficulty reading medical information, understanding and filling out forms, managing finances and finding emergency phone numbers. Illiteracy can be a serious threat to the health and well-being of older adults.

Literacy programs throughout Saskatchewan have been successful in meeting the needs of a diverse population of learners who vary in age, gender, cultural heritage, income levels and rural/urban origins. To date, little has been done to explore the learning needs and resources for older adults who have little or no reading and writing ability.

Estimates indicate that less than 10 per cent of approximately 2,100 learners enrolled in Saskatchewan literacy programs in 1992 were 55 years of age or over.

In February and March of 1992, staff of the Seniors' Education Centre, University Extension, University of Regina conducted the *Saskatchewan Older Adult Literacy Survey.* The project was funded by a grant from Seniors' Independence Program, Health and Welfare Canada. The goal of the survey was to acquire information for an overview of the current state of older adults and literacy in Saskatchewan. Through questionnaires and telephone interviews with 14 literacy program coordinators in the regional colleges, public libraries and technical institutes throughout the province of Saskatchewan, a clearer picture of the older adult literacy learner was drawn.

The majority of older adult literacy learners are low income females, between ages 55 and 60 who have Grade 8 or less formal education. Most are Canadian-born or English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Aboriginal older adults represent the smallest grouping of literacy program registrants.

Among the main reason for older adults' participation in literacy programs is the desire to have more independence and control over their lives. Often this realization is provoked by changes in an individual's life such as the loss of a spouse, retirement or children leaving home. Many wish to improve their self-confidence or to "feel better about themselves."

Literacy programs provide older learners and tutors with an opportunity for companionship. The desire to participate more fully in community life is a goal for a number of older adults.

Barriers to participation

The question remains: if potentially 143,000 older adults in Saskatchewan need literacy resources, why are only 10 per cent of the current learners enrolled in literacy programs aged 55 or over?

Negative attitudes about learning such as "I'm too old to learn" and "I've gotten along so far without being able to read and I'm content the way I am" were mentioned during the telephone interviews with literacy program coordinators. The most frequently stated objection to literacy programs for older adults by non-seniors is "why waste time and money on the old?"

Older adults may hold the widespread misconception that literacy programs are not accessible to them. Literacy advertising features primarily younger people in the pamphlets, posters, and on television and radio.

A need for Seniors' Literacy Programs

Literacy coordinators acknowledged that their resource materials and in some cases their learning environments are more suitable for younger rather than older adult learners. Demands on time and available funding restrict their ability to fully investigate this particular area of literacy.

Some of the coordinators suggested that the Seniors' Education Centre might play a role in providing further research and resource development that could be incorporated into existing literacy programs. It was stressed that a successful project designed for seniors should be accessible, involve peer tutors, and use resources relevant to seniors' needs and interests.

Based on the findings and recommendations of the survey report, the Seniors' Education Centre has received a small grant from the National Literacy Secretariat to design a project involving seniors' literacy issues. The Seniors' Education Centre hopes to secure future funding for a major provincial project in 1993-94. All project phases will be developed for and with older adults in conjunction with existing literacy programs in Saskatchewan.

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO LEARN

For more information or a copy of the Saskatchewan Older Adult Literacy Survey — Final Report please contact:

Seniors' Education Centre
University Extension, University of Regina
College Avenue and Scarth Street
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4S 0A2
Telephone: 779-4816
Fax: 779-4825

***Diane Mullan** is a project coordinator with the Seniors' Education Centre, University of Regina Extension. She is responsible for a number of educational projects for and with older adults in Regina and the Last Mountain region.*

Developing awareness of literacy needs

By Donna Hudson and Louise Folk

"You'd think that they couldn't read the work orders . . . but, of course, they have all graduated from Grade 12, so of course that couldn't be the problem."

"We have a couple of guys who have been around 30 years but they have managed; you can't teach an old dog new tricks."

"Wouldn't it be embarrassing to employees to approach them with this new idea [workplace literacy]?"

"They can do the job, so there would not be any motivation to be in the program."

These quotations are from preliminary research done by the staff of the Business Literacy Project at the Regina Public Library (RPL). The research showed that there were five elements in the current environment of the Regina business community that could affect the successful establishment of **workplace-based** literacy programs:

1. Readiness/felt need is low or nil.
2. Literacy is seen as a social not a business issue.
3. Literacy is not seen as an *immediate* problem.
4. An employee advocate (union, staff association) is usually not present in the market segment mandated to the project (primarily non-unionized and small workplaces).
5. The current economic climate has a definite impact on the money available for any training.

The research indicated the business community did not support establishing **workplace-based** literacy programs although a workplace-based literacy program *was* developed and implemented with a high level of success at the Regina Public Library itself. The success of the program at the library was due to:

1. A strong felt need (for workplace-based literacy programs) at the supervisory level;
2. Visible executive support (chief librarian) and union support (union president);
3. Business Literacy Project staff (consultants) effectively established and worked through relationships with people on site;
4. The fact that the program was developed by staff representatives from all levels of the organization after consultation with staff members.

Given the environment, the project staff *did* feel workplace-related literacy programs could be supported by Regina businesses. Discussions with **The Co-operators** ensued. The Business Literacy Project staff suggested The Co-operators proceed with a volunteer program. The program would involve The Co-operators donating company time, so staff members could participate in community literacy programs. Presently The Co-operator's employees are tutoring learners at the **Circle Project** and are reading to people of all ages at **READ Canada's** reading circles. A second group of volunteers is now being trained and will start volunteering March 1, 1993.

During discussions at The Co-operators, a need for literacy training in the aboriginal employment equity target

in Regina's business community

group was also identified. An Aboriginal Bridging Program is now in the process of being developed with special funding from the National Literacy Secretariat. The program is aimed at making participants "workplace literate." The definition used for "workplace literacy" is the *written and spoken language, basic communication, computation, thinking and problem-solving skills that workers require to perform their jobs*. For example, teaching pronunciation and vocabulary of insurance terms is an area that would be dealt with. This program is to start in September 1993.

The Business Literacy Project began in July of 1991 and is funded by Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada. Project staff continue to strive to develop an awareness of literacy throughout the Regina business community. Through soliciting support and contributions from Regina organizations for various literacy activities the Business Literacy Project has developed a variety of partnership programs within the community. Partnerships have been established with

- The Co-operators
- The Regina Public Library
- The Regina Inn
- The Regina Chamber of Commerce
- Circle Project
- READ Canada
- Regina Literacy Association
- Saskatchewan Literacy Network
- Saskatchewan Employment Equity Practitioners Association (SEEPA)
- International Association of Business Communicators (IABC).

***Donna Hudson** and **Louise Folk** are the project workers for the Business Literacy Project. Donna has a Bachelor of Administration degree and has worked in corporate training. Louise graduated from the University of Alberta in 1991 with a degree in Recreation, specializing in community development.*

For more information contact:
Business Literacy Project
Regina Public Library
P.O. Box 2311
Regina, Saskatchewan
S4P 3Z5
Telephone: (306) 777-6013

ESL literacy for a linguistic minority: the deaf experience

By Tom Holcomb, Ohlone College, Fremont, CA
and Joy Kreeft Peyton, National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education

Learning to read and write effectively is a challenging task for many adults, particularly for those who are deaf. (The term "deaf" is used here to refer to both deaf and hard-of-hearing people.) In spite of concerted efforts by educators to facilitate the development of literacy skills in deaf individuals, most deaf high school graduates read English at roughly a third or fourth grade level as determined by standardized reading assessments. In their writing, they often make vocabulary and structural errors that include omitting or confusing articles, prepositions, and verb tense markers, and they have difficulty with complex structures such as complements and relative clauses.

Having limited literacy skills acts as a barrier for deaf people in the workplace. They often have had limited opportunities at school for vocational training. They also may have difficulties communicating with hearing co-workers and poor performance on work-related reading and writing tasks. Because of these factors, deaf adults in the workplace often find themselves confined to low-level jobs.

This digest offers possible explanations for these difficulties and describes new approaches in deaf education that show promise for improving the literacy skills of deaf adults.

Reassessing sources of literacy difficulties

For centuries, deafness was considered a pathological condition. Deaf people were considered mentally and educationally deficient due to their inability to hear and in need of special education and social services to minimize and correct those deficiencies. However, following the groundbreaking work of William Stokoe (1960) and others, there has been a growing trend away from a pathological definition of deafness. Most educators and researchers in the field of deafness now believe that deaf people share similar language backgrounds and literacy challenges with other linguistic minority groups. Their difficulties with acquiring literacy in English are considered to have linguistic, cultural, and educational rather than pathological roots.

Linguistic differences

One of the primary causes of difficulty with English literacy is that English is a language that deaf people have not heard or have heard only in a limited way. Thus, for them, American Sign Language (ASL) or another form of manual communication is the most accessible language because of its visual properties. As Charrow (1981) points out:

> *It is not the inability to hear that causes the most persistent problems of prelingually deaf persons, but the enormous constraints that that inability puts upon the learning and use of the societal language. (p. 187)*

Because deaf learners do not have access to English in its spoken form, the challenge for them of developing literacy skills is much greater, in some ways, than it is for hearing non-native English speakers.

Cultural differences

A growing body of literature brings a social/cultural perspective to the literacy issues concerning deaf people. American Sign Language, the primary language of many deaf people, is not recognized by linguists as a complete, legitimate language with complex grammatical structures and extensive vocabulary. However, ASL is clearly a minority language in a majority culture that tends not to understand or respect sing language.

Despite the legitimacy of ASL, many deaf people grow up with ambivalent attitudes toward their own language, often feeling inferior to hearing persons. Padden (1987) reports that deaf people's attitudes toward ASL vary between "intense pride" and "a great deal of confusion and shame." This ambivalence extends to English as well. Because of the need to communicate with the non-signing public and to function in an English-literate society, most deaf adults believe that English literacy is important. Still, many hold an equally strong belief that they are unable to master it.

Educational deficiencies

Since the early 1500s, when educators began to realize that the "deaf and dumb" were capable of being educated, a variety of approaches have been used to develop deaf people's literacy. Many educators today, however, argue that these approaches have been woefully inadequate. Oral/aural and phonics-based approaches, for example, have not proven effective, since for deaf learners, printed words are not connected with sounds. Forms of Manually Coded English such as SEE (Signing Exact English), developed by educators to represent English on the hands, are cumbersome to use, do not adequately represent either English or ASL, and have had limited success. Remedial approaches, which have focused on pattern practice, vocabulary lessons, and teaching explicit rules break language into parts and do not allow English to be used in the natural way that it is acquired by hearing individuals. By adulthood, many deaf learners have had

continued . . .

ESL literacy for a linguistic minority: the deaf experience *continued*

years of failure and frustration with learning to read and write in English.

Current approaches to literacy development

At the same time that they may experience frustration and failure, most deaf adults understand the need to be literate in English. As well as being crucial to success in the work world, written English is often the only way they have to communicate with a non-signing public. Recent, innovative educational approaches show promise for reversing the cycle of failure. Space allows only mentioning these approaches briefly, but the references cited provide ample information about them. Some have been used so far primarily with children, but may be effective with adults as well, with appropriate modifications.

- Bilingual/bicultural approaches, which integrate ASL and English and include using videotaped stories in ASL as a precursor to writing compositions in English (Humphries, Martin, and Coye, 1989; Mozzer-Mather, 1990; Paul, 1987; Quigley and Paul, 1984)
- Whole language and writing process approaches, which focus on problem-solving skills needed in the workplace and avoid overt correction of errors and breaking language into parts (Heald-Taylor, 1989)
- Interactive writing, in which deaf learners and teachers converse in written English on teletypewriters (Lieberth, 1988; Nash and Nash, 1982), on local- and wide-area computer networks (Peyton and Batson, 1986; Ward and Rostron, 1983), and in dialogue journals (Staton, 1990; chapters in Peyton, 1990)
- Interactive videodisc, in which computerized ASL video and printed English text are used simultaneously to help deaf learners develop their English skills (Copra, 1990; Hanson and Padden, 1989)
- Closed captioned TV programs, which allow extensive exposure to English through a recreational medium (Bean and Wilson, 1989; Spanos and Smith, 1990)

Conclusion

Mastering written English is a lifelong struggle for many deaf people. Deaf adults develop literacy differently than do their hearing peers. The above instructional approaches, which (a) are student-centered, (b) require meaningful use of both ASL and English, (c) incorporate and build on the language and cultural backgrounds and actual home and workplace issues facing deaf adults, and (d) use creative visual means to teach reading and writing, promise to make the educational process more meaningful, positive, and successful for deaf learners. The use of these approaches for developing the literacy skills of deaf adults needs to be carefully documented and the degree of success determined.

This article was published by the National Clearinghouse on Literacy Education (NCLE), Centre for Applied Linguistics, 1118 22nd St., NW, Washington, DC 20037, telephone (202) 429-9292. NCLE is a federally-funded project that makes available to teachers, administrators, program planners and policy makers information about adult ESL literacy.

Literacy and the mentally handicapped: focus on our abilities, not disabilities

By Angela Tessier and Carolyn Buffie

The Association for Community Living – Manitoba (ACL – Manitoba) is an organization that supports the integration of people with a mental handicap into mainstream society. In 1991, it embarked on a project to identify the number and the needs of adult learners with a mental handicap who are participating in mainstream literacy programs.

Focusing on literacy programs in Winnipeg, it became clear that there are quite a number of mentally handicapped learners who participate successfully in mainstream literacy programs. The focus of the project shifted to how to provide support to literacy centres, volunteer tutors and individuals in specific programs and to make strong connections to the literacy network and to groups like Literacy Workers Alliance of Manitoba (LWAM) and Manitoba Literacy Office.

In the second phase of the project, the focus broadened to include programs province-wide. A survey conducted in December, 1992 by ACL – Manitoba got a very positive response. The outcome was that mainstream programs are willing to support people with a mental handicap. Two of the major challenges they face are:

1. Existing materials and resources need to adopt a high degree of repetition to accommodate the needs of mentally handicapped learners.
2. Many mentally handicapped learners have been labelled all of their lives and believe that they cannot learn. Thus motivation of learners is at times a challenge.

Once learners are accepted into a mainstream literacy program, ACL – Manitoba will provide support in the areas of materials, resources and, if required, will train and provide ongoing support for tutors. Mentally handicapped learners want to be empowered and, in the long run, gain more independence. Frequently, it's the everyday signs, on stores, banks, washrooms, restaurants, buses, and in traffic that the learners want to work on. A very high degree of repetition is required and it takes time. It can be frustrating and disappointing for both the tutor and the learner. Frequently, the transfer of concepts and ideas is not understood by learners and tutors have to use very creative ways to overcome such barriers. Adaptating English as a Second Language (ESL) material and techniques and being aware of the learner's learning style and the learner's life experience have proven to be invaluable.

Empowering the person living with a mental handicap through improved literacy skills ensures that person greater participation in the community and fosters personal pride.

***Angela Tessier** and **Carolyn Buffie** are working as Literacy Coordinators with ACL – Manitoba. Angela previously worked as a volunteer tutor in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, and as Literacy Coordinator Assistant at Parkland Regional College. She also currently works as an instructor for the "Literacy in the Workplace" program with Manitoba Education. Carolyn worked as a volunteer tutor for four years prior to joining ACL – Manitoba. She has extensive experience working with people with special needs, ESL learners and basic literacy learners.*

Please contact us if you have an suggestions or comments:

Angela Tessier/Carolyn Buffie
Literacy Coordinators
Association for Community Living – Manitoba
#1 – 90 Market Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3B 0P3
Telephone: (304) 947-1118
Fax: (204) 949-1464

Write On!

By B.J.P.

My name is no importance to you right now
As we all live in the same neighbourhood;
Bright city lights, busy streets and
hotels and bars.
Which of course we call the streets,
our home!!
Here we're not judged, as long as
you can play,
and stay with the pace.
The stakes are high, and very few win!!!
because so many of us sometimes never win,
by a mere slip of an overdose.
But as I sit here, getting ready,
Well Hell here I go again!!
I hope it's another good day or night.
But as I think God I hate to look at myself, it
seems like I've aged, even though I'm just
19 years old;
My sad sullen eyes with sunken in cheeks;
I look at least twenty six and skinny
as a toothpick.
Dam!! It seems like nothing is gonna fit.
I'm being told to hurry or else I'll
be wearing a fist
right along side the face.
As I pray silently to myself:
oh please let it be another good night!!!!
This is the life I've told myself to live;
that I alone choose.
Well with a hug and kiss;
and just how much he
loves me, but as we depart he says
"Try hard now babe,"
and we'll have a party tonight, like always.
I'm thinking to myself,
That's all we've been doing!!
OH gee!!!! do I ever need a fix.
As he drops me off at my stroll,
the other girls, my sisters of the street,
I greet with a big hello,
And of course, "Do you know who's got?"
Our stories we share are in confidence,
as only we can understand each other ar
how we feel at this time;
Because we all share a lot of the abuse
that has happened to us in the past to us
The months go by, I'm thinking God I've
been sick.
Thinking that all I need is a fix; was I wron
So I make an appointment for the doctor,
So I go to the doctor,
before no time my check
up is complete, as he's writing out my per;
I have a smile on my face, I've scored!!!
Oh wait! he tells me, one of the tests he
says to me, "you're going to have a baby"!!
What!! I say
Suddenly I feel real faint now and
drop my seat.
I hear the doctor talking to me,
but don't know what he's saying to me!!
Damn I'm mad, boy my ol' man is gonna pay.
This is the least I wanted to happen.
I'm thinking great just what I need;
A kid!!
I have no mother, She's in heaven above;
and pops is just another street BUM!!!
What can be worse, so I tell myself.
My dear sweet love, but of course I'm
expecting the worse.

He grabs me and hugs me
with kisses of great joy!!
Now he says to me "Go out to work".
And then of course he asks if I scored,
With no thoughts at all.
I tell him well of course N.O.T.
you pig headed _ _ _ _ _!!!
as I walk out the door; with tears in my eyes.
I walk over to my stroll.
Thinking to myself,
What a guy!!! go to work, ha!
And I'm pregnant yet.
I'm standing there,
wiping the tears that subside.
Oh hell I'll take a few V's (Valium)
to settle the nerves.
I say to myself, I'll tell him later,
That I'm going to quit.
Later that night.
I tell my ol' man, don't get mad but
I thought I'd tell you that;
I'M going to quit everything.
To hell with it all,
with tears in my eyes as I say this
to him, hiding my face in case he hits.
There's silence between us except for my cry.
As I peek through my fingers.
I notice his tears falling from his eyes.
He tells me "I love you babe"
and our baby to be,
I'm glad,
That your going to quit everything
Your wish is my command,
I love you too much to lose you both,
with a lot of love and respect;
and kindness too.
This is coming from my heart,
From me to you's.
But . . life hasn't so happy for me.
I've lived the streets for 15 years.
Of all the alcohol and drugs and my life
on the street.
I finally came to my senses;
realization kicked in,
with a baby due early autumn,
what a sweet victory!!!
I know this now deep in my heart.
I can face myself in my mirror,
with a drug free baby
my next generation, I can finally admit,
and say I'm a dual addict after
all these years.
And that my sweet children will learn;
from us and the mistakes that I made.
That the skills I've learnt from my past,
That drugs and alcohol,
THEY CAN BE HARMFUL & WILL KILL!!!!!
DRUG FREE is A BETTER WAY TO BE!!!!
Not all the time is life so grand,
You'll have your good and bad times, but all
you have to do is Remember
TAKE IT EASY AND ONE DAY AT A TIME!!!!

This poem was written by a learner in the Pine Grove Correctional Centre in Prince Albert, and is based on a true story of life on the street.

COMMENTARY

Volunteers need to be nurtured

By John Harold

It is not easy being a volunteer. Those of you who volunteer on five different committees, work all day and tend to a family won't understand those of us who may not be quite so dedicated or organized. We who volunteer for a one-year stint once a decade do tremendous battle with our conscience and will power, not to mention foregoing more entertaining projects.

Therefore, when a potential volunteer such as myself does step into the limelight to volunteer, he must be understood and treated gently. If he is properly nurtured, he may turn into one humdinger of a volunteer. If not given the proper consideration, you may well have lost not only a volunteer but also a supporter. Permit me to explain.

About two years ago, I approached an organization which deals with literacy programs. I advised them that I had knowledge of a second language and that the gender or ethnic status of the student made no difference to me. I gave them my name, address and phone number. They said they would pass my name on to the appropriate branch. I was never contacted.

One year ago, I also volunteered with another organization. I took out a membership and on the form remarked that I was willing to do a variety of jobs to help them out. I was never contacted.

At this point, I was convinced that there were more volunteers than there were projects. It's hard to be a volunteer with this kind of treatment.

I studied myself in the mirror, recorded my voice and then listened to it. I asked my wife if I, maybe, projected an insincere impression or maybe carried an aura that frightened people. She assured me that I was as attractive as ever.

Having accepted an early retirement sooner than I had planned, there was some time that needed to be filled. Because my body abhors moss growing on its north side, I searched out other long and short term projects.

I often think of the literacy program and why I wasn't contacted. I worked for 40 years, supervised an engineering staff for the last 12 years, was president of two clubs and have been published numerous times (letters to the Leader Post editor). I had a great deal to offer, so why wasn't I contacted?

I still look in the mirror wondering what turned them off. Unfortunately for them, my time is now booked for an indefinite period. Whenever I do have spare time I generally use it to bath, shave and brush my teeth.

To those who run the literacy programs, I say, take a page from the Red Cross Blood Transfusion Service. They know that volunteers are hard to find. They know they lose volunteers. Few people will travel to a location where they get stuck with at least two needles. The Red Cross succeeds because it treats volunteers like Kings and Queens. Volunteers are treated gently and with extreme care. The Red Cross tracks them very closely because it knows that volunteers are hard to get and harder to hang onto.

To those who are involved in the literacy programs, I salute you. You are providing a needed and appreciated service to your fellow human beings.

***John Harold** holds a Certificate in Personnel Administration from the University of Regina. He worked for SaskTel for 36 years and has been involved in various charitable organizations, clubs and with his church. He now curls, golfs, gardens and provides support for his aging father. He says he is not currently looking for additional challenges, and admits this article reflects his humour at its worst.*

Letters to Literacy Works

Dear editor:

I really enjoyed the Winter issue of Literacy Works on Learning Disabilities. There was one thing, though, that I didn't understand. What are "meta-cognitive strategies?" Can you please explain?

Confused

Dear confused:

I checked with Teeya Scholton, author of the article that used the term "meta-cognitive strategies." Very simply, she said, meta-cognitive means thinking about thinking. She also gave the following more in-depth definition.

> "Meta-cognition generally refers to one's knowledge concerning one's own cognitive (thinking) processes. Meta-cognitive skills are the executive functions such as predicting, checking, monitoring, and control of deliberate attempts to study, learn or problem solve." (From *Asking the Right Questions: Assessment and Program Planning for Adults with Learning Difficulties*, page 39)

NETWORK NEWS

Staff and Office Update

Since the last issue of *Literacy Works* went to press, life in the Network office has been chaotic. Jayleen Groff, Administrative Assistant since August, 1992, resigned on very short notice to accept a position with Crown Life in Regina, where she lives.

The Network received a very large number of applicants for the Administrative Assistant position and short-listing was difficult. Shirley Silburt began as the new Administrative Assistant on February 2. Shirley enjoys working with people and computers and her office experience will be a big asset to the Network.

During the time of the staff changes, the Network office was also incorporating the *On Our Way* database into the main database and taking over administrative duties for the paper. We apologize for any errors which may have occurred in the process and hope that you will contact the office if you have any subscription problems.

Over the past three months we have been changing our computer system so that the office will be ready to serve as the regional centre for the National Adult Literacy Database. We also will be setting up a provincial literacy databank. Your input or questions about this are welcome.

On Our Way

The mailing labels are now being printed by the Network office; the mailing itself is done by Work Experience students at SIAST Wascana in Regina. Please contact the office (652-7368) immediately if there is a problem with your subscription.

Although students will not be working directly on composing the paper, the new editor, Jan Herbert, is anxious to receive articles from adult literacy and adult basic education students from across the province. Please send articles to: Jan c/o SIAST Woodland Campus Academic Centre, Box 3003, Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, S6V 6G1, telephone 953-3508.

Board

A First!!! The Honourable Carol Teichrob Attends Network Board Meeting

The Network was delighted to have the Saskatchewan Minister of Education spend an hour at the January 16 meeting. There was a good exchange of information and the Minister gave her department's support to the Network's efforts to establish a provincial Literacy Program Committee. The process of allocating cost-shared literacy funding in Saskatchewan and family literacy initiatives were also discussed.

The Saskatoon Media/NDP MLAs Benefit Hockey Game was a great success — $450 was raised for the Literacy Network and the very intense game ended in a 7-7 tie! Watch for a rematch in 1994. Star-Phoenix political columnist Randy Burton wrote an entertaining account of the game in his January 16 column.

A big thank you to the Regina *Leader Post* for publishing a wonderful mini-paper on Family Literacy. This 8-page, plain language publication will be distributed to teachers at Showcase '93. To order additional copies, send $5 to the Network office and mark "The Roots of Literacy." The graphic artist who did such a wonderful job on the layout is Yves Noblet of Noblet Advertising in Regina. Thanks Yves for a great job. Thanks also to the editorial committee: Sanae Ko, Susan Emson and Norma Klassen and to the proofreaders Susan Emson and Al Brown.

Literacy Program Committee

Twenty-four people from across Saskatchewan attended the January 15 meeting to discuss the formation of a new committee. Recommendations from literacy programs and interested individuals will be compiled by an Interim Committee and submitted to the May Board meeting. This meeting was the result of last year's interagency forums, the growing interest in family literacy and the Network's need for an active practitioner's committee.

Fundraising

The Network needs to raise $15,000 before the end of June if it is to balance its books this year. Please consider making a donation. Tax receipts are issued for all donations over $10.

ACROSS THE NETWORK DESK

Literacy Institute 1994!!! Literacy BC is planning to hold an institute in the Summer of 1994. Watch for further details. No Institute is planned for 1993.

National Family Literacy Conference 1994

The Family Literacy Interest Group (FLIG) is planning a National conference for 1994. Watch for more information. FLIG has a newsletter ($20 per year) and an excellent manual on Family Literacy (free). Contact: FLIG, 35 Ellerbeck Street, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 4H5 telephone (613) 549-3657.

New Report: "Literacy and Poverty; a report from the Inside."

Full Report $10	Bibliography $5
Summary $1	Fact Sheet Free
Training Report $5	

To order: National Anti-Poverty Organization, 316-256 King Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 7M1, telephone (613) 789-0096, Fax (613) 789-0141.

Coming up for *Literacy Works*

Our Summer issue will focus on recent developments in Native Education and Literacy.

In the Fall we'll kick off International Literacy Day (September 8) with a special issue on Literacy and International Development.

If you have ideas for articles for these issues,
or other ideas for *Literacy Works*,
please call the Network office in Saskatoon, 653-7178, or
Liz Ormiston, *Literacy Works* editor, in Regina, 757-7236.

LITERACY WORKS

Vol. 4, No. 4 A Quarterly Publication of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network **Summer 1993**

Native Education and Literacy

Price: $5.00
for non-members
(includes tax)

Editorial Committee this issue
Ved Arora, Brenda Storry, Ron Torgerson

***Literacy Works* Editor**
Liz Ormiston

Contributors this issue
Catherine LaValley, Prince Albert School Division No. 3, Chief Harry Lafond, Mary Heit, Bill McLaughlin, Diane Cote, Lorna Tyler, Murdine McCreath, Vince Nokohoot, Angus P. Cyre, Myrna Turner-Laliberte

Cover graphic by
Mona-Maria Krumenacker

Desktop Publishing
Lines and Letters

Printing
SIAST Wascana Campus

ISSN Number: 1183-3793

Saskatchewan Literacy Network Charitable Number: 0896225-21

About the cover drawing

The circle, in Native tradition, is symbolic of balance and equality. Under the sacred tree, people find healing, power, wisdom and safety. The roots of the tree spread deep into the body of Mother Earth. Its branches reach up like hands, praying to Father Sky. The fruits of this tree are the good things the Creator has given to the people: love, caring for others, generosity, patience, wisdom, fairness, courage, justice, respect, and humility.

Thanks to Mona-Maria Krumenacker, R.N., for designing this graphic especially for *Literacy Works*. Mona-Maria is coordinator of the Sunrise Health Program with the Health Department (Native Health).

Saskatchewan Literacy Network was established in September, 1989. It is a coalition of groups and individuals working for literacy. *Literacy Works* is its quarterly publication and focuses on a different aspect of literacy in each issue.

The Saskatchewan Literacy Network acknowledges support from the Department of Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada.

The ideas expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the Board or Newsletter Committee of the Saskatchewan Literacy Network.

We welcome contributions and responses from students, practitioners or anyone interested in literacy. We reserve the right to edit articles. Major changes, however, will be discussed with the author. Articles and letters may be sent to Saskatchewan Literacy Network, P.O. Box 1520, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7K 3R5, or to Liz Ormiston, Editor, 2349 Robinson Street, Regina, Saskatchewan S4T 2R3.

Articles from *Literacy Works* may be reprinted without permission. An acknowledgement of *Literacy Works* as the source would be appreciated.

For further information call the Saskatchewan Literacy Network at (306) 653-7368 or 653-7178, or call Liz Ormiston at (306) 757-7236.

Contents

Pathways programming key to Metis struggle for literacy by Catherine LaValley 2

START Program: working with First Nations students to build self-esteem and life skills . . . 3

Muskeg Lake library an integral part of the community development process by Chief Harry Lafond . . . 4

Oral tradition a vital component of Native literacy by Mary Heit . . . 6

Word processing available in Native language characters reprinted from the *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* . . . 7

Literacy and employment: Aboriginal participation in mineral sector employment in northern Saskatchewan by Bill McLaughlin . . . 8

Regina Public Library's Native Literacy Project offers innovative new programs by Diane Cote . . . 9

Workplace program aims to bridge the gap between Aboriginal and corporate culture by Lorna Tyler . . . 10

SUNTEP — training native teachers to make a difference by Murdine McCreath 12

Indian Student Education Centre provides supportive environment for youth by Myrna Turner-Laliberte . . . 13

WRITE ON: by Vince Nokohoot and Angus P. Cyre . . . 15

The family that reads together by Audrey Zelenski and JoAnne Johnstone . . . 18

NEW LITERACY RESOURCES . . . 19

NETWORK NEWS . . . 20

***Funding for this issue of* Literacy Works**
was provided by
Saskatchewan Education.

FL 800 753

Pathways programming key to Metis struggle for literacy

By Catherine LaValley

The Saskatchewan Metis Pathways to Success program has been in operation since late 1991. The program is a joint initiative between the Metis Society of Saskatchewan and the federal Department of Employment and Immigration.

The primary objectives of Pathways are:

- to give Metis people decision-making power in regards to federal funding for education;
- to enable Metis people to have better access to post secondary education;
- to encourage Metis youth to stay in school;
- to encourage education and employment equity;
- and to meet the labour market needs.

Literacy is a growing concern for the Metis community in Saskatchewan. The average education level in most Metis communities has traditionally been significantly lower than that of the mainstream population. The Pathways initiative is trying to increase the literacy rate and overall education level of Metis people by the development and implementation of the START program.

In the 1993-94 fiscal year, we received $120,000 to design and implement a program that would encourage Metis youth to remain in school until they complete Grade 12. Each Local Metis Management Board has a START program designed to meet the needs of the Metis youth in their area. For example, in North Battleford and Meadow Lake, school liaison workers work cooperatively with the school board, parents, students and community groups. Each of these groups provides a network of services for Metis students in their communities. Some of the services offered include individual counselling, career information, referral to tutoring and literacy development, community cultural awareness and peer counselling. The entire community becomes involved in supporting Metis youth in their struggle for literacy and a Grade 12 diploma.

The START program has great potential to increase the literacy and educational level of Metis youth in this province. However, the federal government has reduced the funding for this program in this fiscal year. In 1992-93, the budget was $136,000 for the Metis START Program and the 1993-94 year's reduction of $16,000 has had considerable impact at the community level in our ability to develop and deliver an effective literacy and education promotion program. As with all other organizations, we are doing our best to adapt to a shrinking budget while working to access additional funding for the future.

The START program is seen as a key program for Metis in Saskatchewan in our struggle to develop a skilled and literate Metis work force.

For more information contact:
Catherine LaValley
Metis Pathways Secretariat
103 – 219 Robin Crescent
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan S7L 6M8
Telephone: (306) 668-7671

__Catherine LaValley__, coordinator of the Metis Pathways Secretariat, has been involved in the development of Pathways programming for the Regional Metis Management Board of Saskatchewan. The programming includes literacy, post secondary education and adult basic education.

Editor's note: In future issues of Literacy Works we hope to include articles on how Pathways funding is being used by other native peoples to improve literacy programming.

START: working with First Nations students to build self-esteem and life skills

Submitted by Prince Albert School Division No. 3

Prince Albert is a changing city. As the proportion of Aboriginal and First Nations people continues to increase, it becomes imperative that the schools evolve to better meet their needs. Within the public schools, about 40 percent of our population is of Aboriginal ancestry. Yearly, the proportion increases by one and a half to two percent. While we have a number of programs, staff development and other initiatives in place, one that is proving very successful is the START project. This project is open to all students, but is directed at young teenagers who have negative attitudes, poor self-concepts, and who appear at risk of leaving school.

The project is funded through a grant from the federal Department of Employment and Immigration, part of the Stay in School initiative.* The START project operates in three schools. There are 10 students in each START group. The program operates during the noon hour. Each program is headed by a life-skills coach. The program begins with the 10 students sharing the preparation of a lunch, then working on topics such as positive peer relations, building self confidence, building self esteem, and working cooperatively with others — in essence, the life and social skills needed to be successful as an adult.

The program runs three times a week for 10 weeks. There are several unique features. The students are paid $5 for each session they attend. If they include a significant adult, such as a parent, grandparent or other person, then the payment to the student is tripled.

The other unique feature is that students participating in this program must demonstrate they have mastered the skills being taught. Mastery can be demonstrated through preparing a video tape, by talking to other students, or establishing a family project. The choice of how to show competence is left to the student to determine, but is a requirement.

The assessment of the project is twofold. The fact that students can demonstrate mastery of a skill is one obvious component. The second component is that the students' increased efforts in the classroom indicate that change in attitudes is taking place. Helping the students develop more positive attitudes about themselves, over the long term, is the most important goal of the program.

Plans are underway to extend this program so that it can be used with older high school students, can be offered to more students, perhaps arranging three cycles per school year, and can be extended to run during the summer months as well. These plans are taking shape.

For years, educators have known that school success is influenced by the attitudes held by students. We now are in the process of actively helping students acquire the attitudes that will be significant in leading to success and in expecting students to demonstrate what they have mastered. In our changing world, this may be one of our greatest contributions.

For more information contact:
G.A. Streeton
Supervisor of Special Services
Education Centre
545 – 11th Street East
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan S6V 1B1
Telephone (306) 763-1525

**Editor's Note: The Stay in School initiative is a broad government funding program. Pathways funding for native peoples, mentioned in the previous article, falls under the Stay in School initiative.*

Muskeg Lake library an integral part of the community development process

By Chief Harry Lafond

Successful community development includes in its wholistic circle the storing and management of information. Historically, the Cree of Muskeg Lake included in their community structure the management and dissemination of information to make sure children learnt to live strong, productive lives as Crees. The Elders of the community were given the responsibility of pursuing their professional status and of training and teaching the appropriate members of the community to ensure the survival of the Cree community. Unfortunately, the role of the Elders did not escape the forces that laid to waste much of Cree culture and community. In 1993 we are left to assess the situation and to find solutions to reconnect the Cree circle.

The community development process requires simultaneous growth and development in many areas. It is up to the community members to set priorities and undertake plans to ensure optimum and appropriate growth towards their vision of a healthy, vibrant and productive community. At this stage in Muskeg Lake's development, the community has recognized and is responding to the need to organize and store information about itself.

Since 1986, Muskeg Lake has had a library on the reserve. As the Elders teach us, we must make mistakes to learn effectively. Mistakes we made right from the beginning. First, we placed the library in a very poor location. Second, we assumed that interested people brought skills with them when they agreed to work in the library. Third, we are learning that the stereotype of "library" may be restricting the scope and relevancy of the service. We are learning that the library in Muskeg Lake must reflect the cultural history of the Cree. Consequently, we must redefine what the library means in the Cree community. We must look to the past and analyze the present to understand how we are to set up the library to ensure that Elders become an integral part of the programming.

Before we move to develop this type of library, the Muskeg Lake community has started a training program to deal with mistake number two. In October, 1992, six women from Muskeg Lake started a locally-designed training program. The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Center agreed to provide personnel to assist in the instruction of library sciences. Carol Lafond, who is trained as a library technician, teamed with Lynn Hunks to develop a training package that includes extensive hands-on experience. Two members of the community are enrolled to train as language instructors while another four work on library skills. This program is intended to provide career awareness and experiences which encourage those enrolled to pursue either profession at the conclusion of the program in

July, 1993. The program provides the members with three university credits from the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. All three courses are taught by local instructors, helping to create a wider base of academic resources for Muskeg Lake.

While problem number two is moving towards resolution, Muskeg Lake is looking towards problem number three — involving the Elders of the community in the development of the library. In the fall of 1993, the Muskeg Lake administration began approaching and organizing the Elders in the community to become active participants in the life of the community. This will eventually become the base for the development of the library as understood within the context of Cree culture. Our vision is to incorporate what is strong in our culture with what is strong in the traditional meaning of the word "library." This will help us to continue to grow as a community that knows and believes in its own worth.

Chief Harry Lafond *is a Cree from Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in Central Saskatchewan. He is a teacher by trade with a Masters in Education. His training in education and involvement in the field have provided him with the tools to recognize the importance of controlling the education of children and the role of libraries in that process. The active pursuit of community development is an integral part of his leadership role in Muskeg Lake. In that pursuit, education and library development are right in there with economic and social development.*

Oral tradition a vital component of Native literacy

By Mary Heit

Educators everywhere are beginning to embrace a much broader and less ethnocentric definition of the term "literature." The stories, legends, songs, and histories that have been handed down by word of mouth in all cultures around the world from time immemorial are now considered to be literature in their own right. Much of this oral tradition, including that of First Nations peoples, is now being preserved in print form for use in our schools and for the enjoyment of people everywhere.

The oral traditions of First Nations peoples have more than a literary value. For centuries, they have served to pass on the religious philosophies, the histories, and the ethics of the particular cultures from which they originate. For this reason, becoming literate in their oral traditions has always been viewed by Aboriginal peoples around the world as vital to the education of their youth and to the continuance of their cultures.

Educators may agree that becoming literate in one's cultural heritage is a desired goal for students. But what is the link to success in learning to read and write? Motivation, positive self-concept, and relevancy of curriculum are known to be key factors influencing the success of students in acquiring the skills of literacy. When Aboriginal students see *themselves* — their histories and traditions — reflected and valued in the schools they attend and in the curriculum they are taught, they may be more motivated to learn and to enjoy school.

Teachers can promote a relevant curriculum by inviting Aboriginal writers and storytellers into their classrooms, and by including in the literature they use the rich variety of First Nations stories and legends now available in print. This in turn will foster *enjoyment*, another key factor in learning to read and write. Listening to and telling stories are known to contribute to reading comprehension, and a knowledge of story structure, or "how stories work," will contribute to students' writing abilities as well.

The teacher education program at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College in Regina recognizes the value of utilizing the oral traditions of First Nations peoples in the training of Aboriginal teachers and in the education of all children. Although many stories and legends now exist in print form, they were originally intended to be *told*, often with dramatic flourish, humour, and sound effects. Therefore, student teachers at the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College are encouraged to learn these legends and stories, by memory and in the original language whenever possible, and to utilize them in all aspects of their teaching. The stories and legends can be enjoyed for their literary merits, or they can be used as they were in the past — to teach young and old alike moral values and expectations about appropriate behaviour. How much better to discipline students and to teach them rules of conduct through the gentle, yet effective, medium of storytelling! Many stories explain natural phenomena, and hence can be utilized to teach science and health concepts. Others are historical in nature and can be used in the social studies curricula.

All students deserve to come to know and understand who they are through the use of quality literature, oral and written, traditional and contemporary. An equally important value in using such literature is to teach all students to respect and enjoy the cultural heritages of others. Properly utilizing First nations literature can promote both of these goals, and the goals of literacy as well.

***Mary Heit** is a member of the Faculty of the Department of Indian Education, Saskatchewan Indian Federated College, in Regina. She teaches the Reading/Language Arts methods classes for First Nations student teachers enrolled in Indian Education. Previously, Mary taught Aboriginal children for several years in Northern Saskatchewan.*

Word processing available in Native language characters

Reprinted with permission from the* Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, March 10, 1993

The Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre is selling computer programs which can do word processing in the characters used to write aboriginal languages.

Darlene Speidel, director of Indian languages and curriculum development, said the centre hired Randy Coulman of Randco Intelligent Computer Solutions to develop a program which can use aboriginal characters in WordPerfect 5.1.

Coulman, from Saskatoon, developed a software series called First Nation Language Extensions for WordPerfect 5.1. There are separate extensions for Dene, Cree and Saulteaux, Dakota, Nakota and Lakota. Each language version sells for $75.

Speidel said the centre hopes to develop dictionaries and thesauri in aboriginal languages.

Literacy and employment: Aboriginal participation in mineral sector employment in northern Saskatchewan

By Bill McLaughlin

Wollaston Lake in northern Saskatchewan is the site of a unique adult literacy project intended to establish a direct link to employment in the mining industry.

Wollaston Lake is one of six communities which comprise the Athabasca Region. The Athabasca Region is located in the northernmost part of the province, with the majority of the communities scattered along the northern shoreline of Lake Athabasca. There are no roads linking the region to the rest of the province. Major supplies are brought in by ice road, air or barge.

The majority of the residents of the region are Dene. Hunting, fishing and trapping play a major role in their lives. Formal school education levels are low. Over 80 percent of the adult population has less than Grade 9 formal education. Mining is a major economic factor in the region. At present the northern mining sector employs approximately 1,100 people. The mining industry is projecting a significant increase in activity over the next five years, with the majority of expansion to occur in the Athabasca Region.

It was this combinatioan of low formal education levels, high employment, and the potential for increased employment opportunities which brought about the development of a literacy-based program linked to mining employment. Northlands College designed the program in partnership with a regional training council, the Hatchet Lake First Nations, CAMECO and Cigar Lake Mining Corporation. Sask Power donated a recently abandoned power generation station to Wollaston to the Hatchet Lake Band for use as a training centre. CAMECO donated a PALS Literacy Lab to the project. Cigar Lake Mining Corporation, CAMECO and Total Minatco undertook the renovations of the power station to convert it to a training centre.

The program provides a combination of basic literacy instruction, GED Preparation and scheduled mine-related work experience at the Rabbit Lake and Cigar Lake Mine sites. Student work placements are one week long and occur several times over the duration of the course. While on work placement, the students are exposed to a variety of jobs at the mine site. Students are encouraged to obtain equivalent to a Grade 10 level, at which time the participating mine companies have assured hiring preference for upcoming jobs.

Northlands College delivered a similar program in the Athabasca region community of Stony Rapids from 1989 to 1992. During that time, 38 residents of the region went through the program. Fourteen students graduated with an Adult ABE 10 Certificate and 13 students obtained employment.

For more information contact:
Bill McLaughlin
Vice President of Programs
Northlands College
Box 509
LaRonge, Saskatchewan S0J 1L0

***Bill McLaughlin** has worked in the field of adult education in Saskatchewan for the past 18 years. He spent 11 years in northern Saskatchewan in a variety of capacities: Adult Basic Education instructor, English as a Second Language instructor, program coordinator, program director, and vice-president.*

Regina Public Library's Native Literacy Project offers innovative new programs

By Diane Cote

The Native Literacy project of the Regina Public Library provides literacy assistance to the Native community of Regina. Volunteer tutors of Native ancestry are recruited from the community and matched with a learner according to mutual and cultural interests and availability. Tutors meet with one learner or more, if desired, for at least two hours per week. The Native Literacy Project is a learner-centered program in which learners identify their own goals and literacy needs. Native Literacy tutors are provided with 16 hours of training free of charge. Literacy-related support services such as workshops, annual conferences and newsletters are provided for tutors and learners.

The Native Literacy Project is currently offering four other programs free-of-charge to the public. All of these programs are new and ongoing.

Family Circle Program aims to include the Native community in the literacy events at Albert Library. Parents and extended adult family members are encouraged to join this circle by telling or reading their stories to the children or by just letting the children read books to them. At the end of every month each child is given their very own book! These books are donated by READ Canada. The majority of children in this program are of Native ancestry, therefore the great need for the participation of Native story-tellers and elders. They are invited to visit the circle and share traditional Native legends with the children. This program encourages the love of reading among children and their families.

Next Step Program is a learning get together of about four to five tutors and approximately 10 learners (this figure varies). The tutors are from the Native and Youth Literacy Projects and the students are from the John Howard Society's Next Step Program. Both projects come together to assist the program's young offenders in improving their literacy skills. The students have either dropped out or been expelled from high school. This weekly program encourages the students to develop their literacy skills and return to high school.

Aboriginal Literacy Bridging Program is a collaborative project of the Regina Public Library's Business Literacy Project and the Native Literacy Project, the Co-operator's and Circle project. Its purpose is to increase the number of Aboriginal target group members qualified for employment at the Co-operator's by upgrading their literacy/communication skills. (See story, page 10.)

Employee Volunteer Program is a collaborative product of the Regina Public Library's Business Literacy Project and Native Literacy Project, the Co-operator's, READ Canada and Circle Project. Its purpose is to increase the general awareness of Native culture and the literacy-related needs within the Native culture throughout the Co-operators' workplace. A number of Co-operators' employees are placed in Native literacy-related activities such as READ reading circles and the Family Circle Program at Albert Library.

For more information on any of these programs call:

Diane Cote, Native Literacy Coordinator
(306) 777-6049 or 777-6077

***Diane Cote** is the Native Literacy Coordinator for the Regina Public Library. She has been involved with children's and family literacy as a former associate for READ Canada.*

Workplace program aims to bridge the gap between Aboriginal and corporate culture

By Lorna Tyler

Regina Public Library's Business Literacy Project began almost two years ago in June, 1991. Its original objective was to establish literacy programs in Regina businesses which did not have access to the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour's Workers' Education for Skills Training (WEST) program. Early discussions with business people were discouraging. All of them believed that a literacy program would be far too expensive and were unwilling to agree to set one up at their work site.

However, we discovered one bright spot during a meeting with Glenn Bohay, Employment Equity Coordinator with The Co-operators insurance company. Glenn told us that literacy was part of the reason he was having difficulty attracting and keeping Aboriginal staff members. In the workplace, "literacy" includes both written and spoken language, basic communication, computation and the problem-solving skills that employees need to perform their jobs. And there is always a specialized vocabulary. In the case of The Co-operators, it includes terms like "underwriting," "actuarial tables," and "reinsurance."

Glenn clearly stated that the problem he was experiencing was not due to the inadequacies of individuals. Rather, there was an education or training gap which needed to be bridged before Aboriginal people could truly be successful at The Co-operators. And thus the Aboriginal Literacy Bridging Program was born.

In June, 1992 we agreed to apply to the National Literacy Secretariat for funding to develop an eight-week pilot program involving four Native learners and the supervisors from the areas of the company where we would be working. The program would include four main parts: cross-cultural sensitivity, The Co-operators corporate culture, co-operative philosophy, and work habits and styles. Each of these modules would provide plenty of subject matter for literacy instruction. The Co-operators received funding for the pilot project in August, 1992.

We began by bringing together an advisory committee. It included both native and non-native people from Regina's Circle Project, Youth Unlimited and, of course, The Co-operators and the Regina Public Library. We believe that a program which doesn't accurately reflect the needs of Native people cannot be successful. Therefore, we extended an open invitation to individuals at

Saskatchewan Indian Federated College and Gabriel Dumont Institute to be involved in the process of deciding the content to be covered in the program.

As of April, 1993, we had not yet begun the detailed task of curriculum development. The Co-operators made a corporate decision in January to reduce the size of its Regina staff. This meant that Glenn needed to reconfirm his management's support before proceeding further.

Furtunately, he was successful and the pilot project will go ahead in September, 1993. Curriculum development began in April, with completion targeted for July. The Co-operators plans to recruit and select the program participants over the summer. Our hope is that this program will not only "bridge the gap" for the first group of learners, but will provide an effective model for future programs, both at The Co-operators and in other businesses.

For more information contact:
Lorna Tyler or Louise Folk
Business Literacy Project
Regina Public Library
2311 – 12th Avenue
Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3Z5
Telephone: (306) 777-6013

***Lorna Tyler** has been coordinator of the Business Literacy Project since it started in 1991. She is also a literacy tutor at the Regina Public Library and just completed her Bachelor of Education at the University of Regina, specializing in adult education and vocational training.*

Proposed for 1993-94: Literacy Works Themes

... Fall '93: Literacy and International Development (deadline: July 1)

... Winter '93-94: Literacy Programs Within the Justice System (deadline: October 15)

... Spring '94: Youth and Literacy: Are Our Schools in Crisis? (deadline: January 31)

... Summer '94: Francophone and Other Minority Language Literacy (deadline: April 1)

If you have ideas for articles for any of these issues, please call the Network office in Saskatoon, 653-7178 or Liz Ormiston, Literacy Works *editor, in Regina, 757-7236.*

SUNTEP — training native teachers to make a difference

By Murdine McCreath

Are you of Aboriginal ancestry? Have you ever thought about being a teacher and making a difference? Perhaps SUNTEP is a program you should know about.

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research is the educational arm of the Metis Society of Saskatchewan. The Institute is responsible for the design, development and delivery of specific educational and cultural programs and services. The Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP), established in 1980, is one such program. Since 1984, 190 students have graduated with a Bachelor of Education Degree.

SUNTEP is a four year Bachelor of Education program, offered by Gabriel Dumont Institute in co-operation with the Saskatchewan Department of Education, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan. The program is offered in three centers — Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina.

SUNTEP is a fully accredited program leading to a Bachelor of Education degree. For the first two years of their studies, SUNTEP students attend classes at a SUNTEP location. The final two years include an internship and class work at one of the university campuses.

The SUNTEP program includes extensive native studies and cross-cultural education methods, with an emphasis on Metis/Indian history and culture. A substantial amount of time is spent in schools working with teachers and students. Most of this field work is done in urban centres. The program provides a solid foundation in the theories and skills of teaching.

For qualified students of Metis and Non-status Indian ancestry, University tuition fees are covered by the program. Most SUNTEP students borrow money from the Canada and Saskatchewan Student Loan Program while attending university. Some of this debt is forgivable if students are academically successful. Students who qualify for assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs may be eligible for a living allowance.

Students who are in the SUNTEP Program say they like the small classes and the co-operative way people work and learn together. A favourite time of the year is the weeks the students spend in classrooms. These hands-on experiences with children renew SUNTEP students' goal to be the best cross-cultural teachers they can.

Anyone interested in more information can contact the SUNTEP Centre nearest them or call the toll free number of Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research 1-800-667-9851.

Indian Student Education Centre provides supportive environment for youth

By Myrna Turner-Laliberte

My name is Myrna Turner-Laliberte. I am the vice-principal and a Grade 4 teacher at Angus Mirasty School in Prince Albert. I teach 10 and 11-year-old students in a multi-graded classroom. Reading levels vary, from readiness (beginning readers) to Grade 5. Most of the students' first language is Cree, with a few Dene speakers.

The James Smith Reserve near Prince Albert is my home community. I attended St. Michael's School at Duck Lake for nine years and finished high school at Kinistino and Saskatoon. I received my Bachelor of Education at the University of Saskatchewan. I have been involved in the field of Indian Education for several years — teaching, researching and consulting. I taught with the Lac La Ronge band for three years and have been with the Prince Albert Indian Student Education Centre (PAISEC) for 10 years.

My focus has been promoting literacy among Indian youth by adapting language programs to meet their needs.

The Language Arts Program of PAISEC promotes the acquisition of all language skills by surrounding the students with language and good models in a supportive environment. Students are encouraged to take risks and are provided with meaningful situations to practice language skills. "It is recognized that, although there are specific times in which listening, speaking, reading and writing skills are focused upon, the acquisition of language skills is something that is constant and exceeds the boundaries of timetables, involving all class activities." (PAISEC Curriculum Guide, 1986).

Teachers are encouraged to take the best of reading programs — English as a Second Language, Basal, Whole Language, Phonics and Literature — to teach literacy. The school follows the provincial curriculum with a strong emphasis on culture, heritage and native history. The school also draws upon the special cultural strengths of teaching staff, 80 percent of whom are Native. Students are exposed to meaningful language experiences by: being engaged in regular writing activities; being provided ample opportunities to develop and refine oral language abilities; and being given time to practice and exercise all of their developing literacy skills.

For more information contact:

The Indian Student Education Centre
Box 1988
Prince Albert, Saskatchewan
S6V 6K1

Write On!

By Vince Nokohoot

I was born on the White Bear Indian Reserve, not in the hospital, but in a shack. I attended day school but didn't like it; so I was sent to a Residential school. I left home at the age of 15, ended up in Regina. I met a few guys that left home for the same reason. We started getting in trouble with the law. I ended up in jail at the age of 16. I was always on the street. I went to different cities like Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton, Calgary, Vancouver but every city I went to I was always on the street. I couldn't get a job because I didn't have an education. So I panhandled for money, slept at other people's places or at the Salvation Army, but now I'm at the Circle Project trying to better myself and my education.

❦ ❦

Years ago when I was in my 20s I was put on probation for carrying a concealed weapon. I was supposed to do my probation on the reserve but it was too boring so I came back to Regina. I was at my parents' place, when a fight broke out. Everyone left and they went over to my Dad's sister's place. I stayed behind but when everyone had left the cops came to the door. They were looking for a stolen bicycle; it wasn't there. They asked what my name was. I told them. They called in and found out I wasn't supposed to be in Regina. As they were taking me away I told them that I had a knife in my back pocket. When I went to reach for it I was pushed against their car. They took the knife and I was put in jail for the night. That gave me time to think of what I was going to say to the Judge. The cops told their story first. They said I reached behind my back in fast motion and tried to reach for the knife to use it. Now it was my turn to speak. I told the Judge that I was eating when I heard a knock at the door. When I got to the door I forgot to put the knife down so I just put it in my back pocket. The Judge said that he had the same habit of forgetting to put down a fork or knife when someone came to his door. Case Dismissed.

❦ ❦

Four years ago I had a good friend, he was a diabetic. He used to come and find me in the park every day. He didn't drink the wine I offered him. He said, it made him sick. So, he drank the rubbing alcohol he used to get from the drug store and the needles he got he used to sell them all. One day he cut his toe. It got infected. He never did go to see a doctor. Every day like he was supposed to do. I started drinking his rubbing alcohol with him. He was getting skinnier by the day. His eyes started to sink in and he got mad at everyone around him, even me, his

best friend. I knew he was sick but he wouldn't listen to anyone about going to the hospital. For two days I didn't see him around downtown, or at the Marian Centre. I was just joking when I told some friends of mine "maybe that old buggers dead some place." He didn't tell anyone where he stayed, only his daughters. Well one day they went to his place; he couldn't walk or go to the bathroom and he was starving. They called the ambulance and they took him to the General Hospital. He was there for a week before they amputated his leg. He lived for a week before he died. I still think of him when I go to the park. All my other friends will be in the park this summer, but not him. But life goes on. I'm still a panhandler. I still have friends that will die from drinking or that will kill themselves, but I'm still alive. Maybe one day sooner or later it will be my turn to go. I just live from day to day.

❦ ❦

Years ago when I was living on the street there was one place I used to hang around. That place was called at that time The Queen's Hotel. I didn't have a place to stay so the people that did have a room hid me from the owner because if he did see me I was told to leave and getting something to eat was hard. I've seen people eat from the garbage so I had to do the same. When someone there did get money we all gathered together in one room and drank. But it was mostly lysol because it was cheap. I know a lot of people who have died from drinking that stuff and a lot of them were friends. When there's a party like that there's always someone there who wants to fight. That's when someone gets hurt or killed and a lot of times someone has drugs. When you're drunk you don't care if it kills you or not. When I'm on the bus we pass through the places I used to hang out and I see a lot of people I used to drink with and the past always comes back to me because I was there at one time. A lot of times I would like to go out there and see the people I know, but I can't. If I go back to my old ways
I'm dead.

118

The Happy Hunting Grounds

By Angus P. Cyre

This story was told to me by an Elder of the Cree Nation. This is how he told me the tale I am about to tell you.

It seems one year it was very hard to find game to feed your family, for that was how the natives survived, on the wild game one hunted. Well one day this warrior took his family along on the hunt with him. He went very far into the woods and proceeded to find a good camp ground, to set up the tepee and tether the horses. This warrior knew he had to find game; for winter would soon be upon them and they would starve if his hunt was not successful. He had his family, which consisted of his wife and two children. After supper he told his wife that he would be leaving in the morning. When the morning arrived he left the camp on foot and proceeded further into the bush by himself. Later on that morning he chanced to come across some moose tracks and proceeded to stalk the animal. Upon finding the moose he could not get a decent shot at the animal, for the leaves were already beginning to fall and they crunched underneath his moccasins, thereby frightening the moose out of range of the gun. After stalking the moose for a great many hours he became tired. So he decided to rest by a great pine. Upon falling asleep the warrior died.

The warrior dreamt while in death about a cave which he entered and continued walking through it while all around him was total darkness. He soon saw a light shining and proceeded toward the light and entered it, where he stepped out into a valley with a river running through it. He walked up to the shore of the river and saw that across the other side were canoes of many colours like those of the rainbow. The people called to him and came to get him in the canoes. He met the chief and many of his relatives that he knew when they were alive. By then it began to dawn on him that he was dead. The warrior upon coming to this realization asked the chief if he could go back for he had a family to feed; which needed him. The chief said it was strange for someone to ask such a thing for the needs, as well as the family, were well taken care of. He also explained to the warrior that his place was only for natives and the whites could never be part of it for their cultures were different. But the elder chieftain took into account the warrior's family and agreed he should go back. So they fed the warrior and told him to rest. When upon entering sleep he could see the cave again and he remembered falling from the cave's mouth. When he awoke he was all covered with fresh snow, which he proceeded to brush off of himself. He began to wonder about his family and his strange dream, or so he thought. He was making his way back to his encampment, when he came upon a moose which he killed. He put the meat into a knapsack; at least what he could carry, and made his way back to his family. Upon arriving at his campsite he found that his camp seemed deserted. The horses were still tied up and the fire was out. He went into the tepee which seemed deserted upon first inspection, but upon a closer examination of fur piled in the center of the tepee he found his wife and family huddled together for warmth and consolation for they had run out of food and were hungry. He told his wife to get up and cook some of the meat and feed everyone. He said he would explain later, when his wife asked, "where were you for three days?"

In closing I would like to say that my name is Angus Cyre and I am a Cree native from the Gordon's Reserve, near Punnichy Saskatchewan. I have studied my native culture and its traditions, as well been a part of its ceremonies, sweats and teaching for my grandfather used to teach me the way when I was very young. These teachings I will carry with me all my life, as well as learn every day for life is the greatest teacher of us all. I now reside in Regina and I am in the process of furthering my education.

Thanks to Patricia Colpitts of the Circle Project in Regina for submitting these learner writings!

The family that reads together . . .

By Audrey Zelenski and JoAnne Johnstone

Students from our two Adult Basic Education classes at Woodland Institute's Academic Centre have just completed the Family Reading Program.

This new venture was developed and delivered by Elsie Livingston, a retired SIAST instructor who is involved in local and provincial literacy initiatives.

The goal of the program was to introduce the value of reading to the children of adult students who themselves were not yet confident of their own reading ability. The program, which ran every Wednesday for eight weeks, included reading sessions, videos and a library tour. Each reading session introduced new, appealing children's books, including contemporary authors and the old classics. Elsie read with the students; the students read aloud; they discussed; they participated; and at the end of each session they took home a book to start their own library.

As part of the project, a very successful "Kids Reading Day" was held and 16 students brought 15 children. Together they shared experiences, drew pictures, read in small and large groups, and enjoyed snacks.

As Adult Basic Education instructors, we were pleased to see the high interest shown by the students. They were eager to read, to include their children, and to participate in each session. Their evident anticipation for the next session made the benefits of a family reading obvious to everyone involved.

Thanks to Elsie Livingston for all her work and we hope to see the program continue in the future.

***Audrey Zelenski** and **JoAnne Johnstone** are Adult Basic Education Instructors at Woodland Institute, Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science and Technology (SIAST) in Prince Albert.*

This article was originally run in the April 1993 issue of SIAST Today.

Saskatchewan Literacy Network members and *Literacy Works* subscribers

September 30 marks the end of the membership/subscription year. Before you take a break for the summer, make a note in your fall calendar to renew your membership in the Network and/or your subscription to *Literacy Works.*

New Literacy Resources

Suggested Resources for Literacy Classrooms
Produced by the Manitoba Literacy office
No charge
For further information contact: Devron Gaber, 417 – 185 Carleton Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3J1, telephone (204) 945-8571, fax: (204) 945-0356

"WORDS," a moving video in which three learners talk openly about how illiteracy has affected their lives is an excellent teaching video. It is designed to be used with a wide range of audiences. Send $19.95 to New Brunswick Committee on Literacy, 900 Hanwell Road, Fredericton, New Brunswick E3B 6A2

Plain Language Resource Centre Catalogue
Order from: The Plain Language Resource Centre Departmental Library, Room 2E2, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 1K5 (819) 997-6881 or fax (819) 953-7988

Saskatoon Public Library has numerous video and audio cassettes designed for tutor training. Out of city residents who hold regional library cards can borrow these items. Note: you can find out the holdings through your local library or through your modem!

Easy to read books for new readers written by Caribbean and African learners plus Tutor/Teacher resource books for supporting adults with disabilities/psychiatric experiences. From $5-$10. Write Adult Literacy Program, St. Christopher House, 248 Ossington Avenue, Toronto, Ontario M6J 3A2, telephone: (416) 539-9000, fax (416) 532-8739

"The Recognition for Learning Pilot Project," an achievement testing of adult learners who are not in diploma programmes. Available from Andrea Leis, Huron-Perth Literacy Committee c/o Conestoga College, 270 Water Street, P.O. Box 848, Stratford, Ontario N5A 6W3

NETWORK NEWS

Project Update

Computer database — We were disappointed by the small attendance at the two training sessions in March. Practitioners still have a lot of questions about the relative costs and benefits of electronic telecommunications. Saskatchewan Education staff are preparing a cost comparison of the two major systems available in the province (NALD and SEINeS). It appears that SEINeS may be the least expensive option for Saskatchewan; also it is relatively easy to learn.

The Network will continue to provide information (and moral support!) to people interested in receiving and sending information electronically. As our own expertise increases, we will be able to access information from NALD more quickly. The Network will charge a small search fee to cover the line charges associated with database searches.

The long-term goal of setting up a database of resource information for the use of practitioners is finally in sight. Practitioners will be invited to submit information about resource materials which they think should be included in the database.

Family Literacy — The Network is developing a Saskatchewan family reading training program and resource materials training is scheduled for August 25 to 27 in Regina and the week of September 13 in Saskatoon (dates to be finalized later); trainers will be Norma Klassen and Pat Hoffman. Each session will be limited to a maximum of 12 participants. Registration fee of $325 (to be confirmed) will include training and resource manuals. To register, please contact the Network office by June 30.

Participants must have experience in at least one of the following:

- adult education
- early childhood education
- language arts
- life skills coach/adult counsellor

The Minister of Social Service and the Minister of Education have given priority to the establishment of two pilot preschool projects which will involve parents. The Network has been asked to serve on the advisory committee. The next few months promise to be very busy.

The Network will be setting up its own "task force" on Family Literacy. This group will meet three to four times per year and will be a subcommittee of the Literacy Advisory committee (see below). Its purpose will be to encourage the implementation of family literacy programs in the province.

On Our Way

Jan Herbert, the new editor of the paper, is doing a great job. The last issue for this academic year will go to print on May 20 and then Jan will be putting her expertise to work in the development of guidebooks for instructors and tutors who use *On Our Way*.

Learners Committee

The report on the *Learners Today; Leaders Tomorrow* conference went to print on April 7. Copies can be purchased for $7 each through the Network office.

Funding

The Network is grateful for financial support from Saskatchewan Education for the publication of the spring and summer issues of *Literacy Works*. The fall issue on International Literacy will be funded by the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation.

This year the Network is providing administrative support to the Saskatchewan Literacy Foundation in the organization of the Gzowski Golf Tournament and Literacy Award of Merit Dinner. We are pleased to have established a positive working relationship with the Foundation.

"Literacy, Language and Culture"

The joint conference and annual meetings of the Network and the Saskatchewan Council for Educators of Non-English Speakers (SCENES) are scheduled for October 15 and 16 at the Manitou Springs Hotel at Watrous. The keynote address will be given on Friday evening by Evelyn Murialdo of Toronto. Conference organizers have planned an interesting series of workshops related to the theme.

The registration fee has been tentatively set for $80. This will depend on how successful we are at finding sponsors for specific parts of the program. Any ideas on possible sponsors would be very welcome. If we do not raise the budgeted amount of sponsorship, we will have to raise the registration fee.

Consider joining us. In addition to the social events, those with arthritic tendencies can plan a soak in the hotsprings! Conference brochures will be mailed to members in June.

Board and Staff

Organizational Evaluation — Graduate student Lisa Talvak has just completed her research on the evaluation of the Network and will be submitting her report to the board in mid-May. This will provide the basis for discussion at the retreat on May 28 and 29. Thank you to everyone who participated in the evaluation.

Norma Klassen will be resigning from the board because of her increasing time commitment to the family literacy activities. The Saskatchewan Adult Basic Education Association (SABEA) has recommended that Allan McLaughlin replace Norma on the Network board. Allan is an instructor with Northlands College in Buffalo Narrows.

The Network has applied for Challenge '93 funding to hire a summer student to assist with organizing the golf tournament and award dinner. Once that is complete, the student will be cataloguing Network resources and developing a circulation system so that we will be able to loan out materials.

Call for resources, tutoring tips, classroom ideas.

Have you come across a new or interesting literacy resource, tutoring technique or classroom exercise that you'd like to share with *Literacy Works* readers?

Even if you don't have the time or inclination to write about your discovery, please contact us and we'll find someone to do the write-up. We look forward to your suggestions. Contact Liz Ormiston, *Literacy Works* editor at 757-7236 in Regina or call the Network office in Saskatoon, 653-7178.

Committee restructuring in the works

By Nayda Veeman

The interim Literacy Program Committee met on April 2 and developed Terms of Reference for a new committee to be called the **Literacy Advisory Committee**. This committee is based on the work done by the former Practitioners' committee, the Family Literacy committee and the recommendations made at the two Interagency Forums held in 1992.

The steering group recommends that the new committee be comprised of representatives from each of the following geographic regions: South West, South East, East Central, West Central, Northern, Regina City, Saskatoon City, Prince Albert City.

In addition, it will have one representative from the Network Board of Directors and ex-officio representation from Saskatchewan Education and Multiculturalism and Citizenship.

Anyone wishing a copy of the Terms of Reference should contact the Network office. Anyone interested in serving on the committee should contact a regional literacy coordinator or local literacy association.

Why a New Literacy Committee?

Government support and funding for literacy is shrinking:

- There will be a 10 percent reduction in the cost-shared funding available to Saskatchewan programs this year.
- There is no one solely responsible for literacy in the Saskatchewan Department of Education.
- The Department no longer calls regular meetings of literacy co-ordinators; colleges are reluctant to fund meeting expenses.

Literacy needs a strong, community based voice to:

- advise Saskatchewan Education and to influence government policy.
- influence public and private funding priorities.
- encourage the development of public/private partnerships both on a provincial and local level.

A series of meetings and discussions over the past 18 months has led to development of draft Terms of Reference for a new Literacy Program Committee. The proposal is for a "think tank" on literacy which would draw its membership from geographic regions. This structure would encourage cooperation between regional colleges and other organizations such as the Saskatchewan Reading Council on a regional basis. These regional literacy groups would be in a good position to draw in other community support such as local businesses and service clubs for specific projects.

The task of the interim committee which drafted the Terms of Reference was how to establish a provincial committee which was regionally and sectorally representative while still keeping the committee size realistic (eg. 12). In addition, who would determine which organizations should or should not be represented? The committee decided that the most feasible and cost-effective way to achieve this was through regional representatives who would be chosen by broadly-based groups.

The Network's Situation

The Network needs to have strong and regular input from the practitioner community. The following is a brief history of practitioner involvement in the Network:

1. Practitioners Committee: December 4, 1989 to March 13, 1992. The committee developed policy for workshops and seminars and gave guidance with respect to the Prairie Literacy Institute. Meetings were held in conjunction with Literacy Coordinator meetings; practitioners other than coordinators had trouble attending since they did not have time or money to do so. Since coordinator meetings are no longer held and there is no specific task for the committee, the committee has stopped meeting.
2. Family Literacy Advisory Committee: October 24, 1991 to September 1, 1992. This committee was Saskatoon based and meetings tended to be information sharing rather than policy making. With the great increase in family literacy activity provincially there is a need for a provincial advisory group. This could be a reference group under a provincial literacy program committee.
3. In 1992 and 1993, the Network was asked by Saskatchewan Education to serve in an advisory capacity in the review of cost-shared project proposals. Since 1992, the Network has had representation on the Board of the Saskatchewan Literacy foundation. These activities require a reference group in the literacy community.
4. The Network board has provision for sectoral representation through eight representative positions.

Footnote

One of the most difficult tasks which the Network has had over the last four years is the effective involvement of learners in the literacy movement. Much effort has gone into trying to establish local learner support groups. It occurs to me that a more meaningful way to involve learners could be to involve them in regional literacy groups where they could be mentored by others in the group and they would broaden their contacts within their own communities. This would also accommodate the high turnover in the learner population which is an insurmountable difficulty for support groups.

Conclusion

This is a time of challenge for literacy practitioners in Saskatchewan. It is also a time of opportunity. I hope that the above comments will assist the dialogue. I encourage everyone to participate either through local literacy programs or by contacting the Network office directly.

On behalf of the Network board and staff I want to wish everyone a wonderful and well deserved summer holiday!

Advertise in Literacy Works . . .

and reach Literacy, English as a Second Language
and Adult Basic Education instructors,
learners and administrators across Saskatchewan.

Our advertising rates are:

Full page:	$250	($175 for non-profit groups)
Half page:	$140	($ 90 non-profits)
Quarter page:	$ 75	($ 50 non-profits)
Business card size:	$ 40	($ 35 non-profits)

Back issues of Literacy Works available

The following back issues of *Literacy Works* are available for $5 each from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network:

Vol. 2, No. 2	Focus on the Learner
Vol. 3, No. 1	Women and Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 3	Family Literacy
Vol. 3, No. 4	Special Issue on Literacy Resources
Vol. 4, No. 1	New Canadians and Literacy
Vol. 4, No. 2	Literacy and Learning Disabilities